

Sharif Zeid to join King in London

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker left Amman Wednesday for the United Kingdom to join His Majesty King Hussein. The prime minister was seen off by Deputy Prime Minister Thouman Al Hadad, Minister of Transport Ali Subaitan, Minister of State for Prime Minister Ibrahim Izzedine and Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber.

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Israelis 112 Gaza

YOUNIS, Occupied town of Khan Younis, said Israeli soldiers killed two Palestinians and wounded 42 in the Gaza Strip Wednesday.

Younis said Israeli soldiers stepped onto his balcony and opened fire on him. He was also shot dead. Naim, 32, when the enraged soldiers attacked him with a cousin of the two told.

Deaths raised to 11 the number of Palestinians killed by Israeli expelled 415 to Lebanon on Dec.

over the unprecedented explosion into street which extended into the Gaza Strip Wednesday. Palestinian residents challenged Israeli on almost every corner.

ran out in Sabra neighborhood in Gaza City while summoned residents to the army.

out on the streets and the Zionist army," they from loudspeakers.

loudspeakers used donkeys to carry metal to block the burning tyres.

read verses from the Quran and speakers adding atmosphere which pre-Gaza.

engulfed the entire including areas where 30,000 Palestinians were living in their homes by a Palestinian said the decision was the biggest in Gaza.

case, about 500 in Gaza were in solidarity with the now stuck in Lebanon.

said at least 42 were wounded in Gaza City and in Khan Younis.

meanwhile demands by dovish ministers direct negotiations with the PLO as a way of ending the violence.

apparent softening of opposition, even is who argued against the PLO cited tactical reasons, and left open the door for the PLO role in the peace future.

Minister Shimon Peres the Palestinians of the Gaza Strip to choose their future.

Palestinians: Peace talks in peril

Cairo meeting to discuss failure of peace process

OCCLUDED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Palestinian leaders said on Wednesday Israel's expulsion of 415 Palestinians to Lebanon was killing Middle East peace talks and could make the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) resume armed struggle.

The Palestinian leaders, all members of the Palestinian delegation to peace talks with Israel, pointedly said no decision had been made to abandon the negotiations.

The PLO, directing the talks from behind the scenes, has said negotiations should not resume until the evictees come home. Radical groups close to the evictees have opposed the peace process from the start.

"The whole matter is under discussion," said Faisal Al Hussein, the overall head of the Palestinian team holding peace talks with Israel in Washington.

"We are at the edge," he told a news conference in an unheated theatre in Arab East Jerusalem. "We hope someone will do something to give a chance to this dying peace process."

Mr. Hussein, flanked by Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi and Ghasan Al Khatib of the peace talks delegation, said the PLO could turn its back on talks and revert to armed struggle.

"We will try to do everything (to reverse the expulsions) because when we are talking about such an option we know it means more casualties, more lives," Mr. Hussein said.

Israel put the PLO in a difficult position when it expelled the 415 last week in reprisal for the killing of five soldiers by the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas).

Many Palestinians said the mass expulsion showed that the peace talks were leading nowhere and that Hamas was right to prefer armed struggle against the Israeli occupation.

The Palestinians boycotted the last session of the latest round of talks to protest at the expulsions.

Egypt said Wednesday it was hosting a meeting of foreign ministers of the Arab parties to coordinate positions on the Middle East peace process.

Foreign Minister Amr Musa told reporters the meeting would be held in Cairo Thursday. He made clear that Egypt wants Arab-Israeli peace talks to continue despite the crisis.

But Mr. Musa, for the second time in a week, denounced the expulsions and urged Israel to rescind them. He said he requested this in a phone call Wednesday to Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres.

"The repatriation decision must be made as quickly as possible because it affects the peace process," Mr. Musa said. "Peace should be given a chance... and this call is addressed to all the parties, particularly Israel."

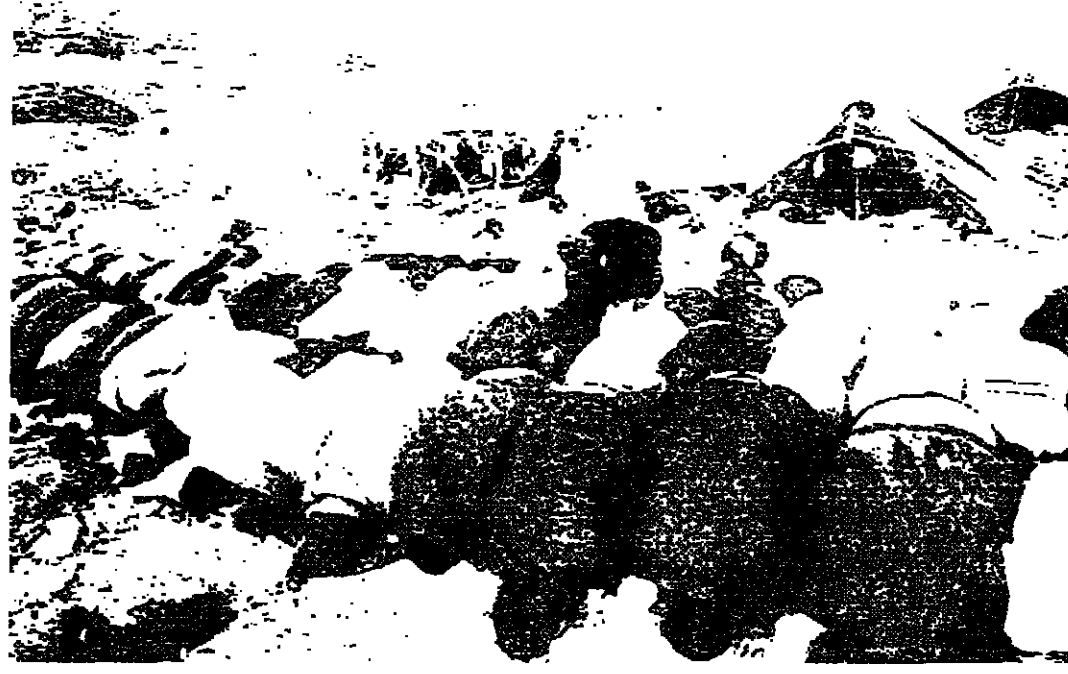
The Cairo ministerial meeting will group Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, the Palestinians and Egypt.

The PLO will ask the Cairo meeting to boycott the peace talks until Israel allows the return of the 415 Palestinians stranded in South Lebanon, a Palestinian delegate said.

The Palestinian side will ask the Arab participants in the peace process to suspend their participation until the deportees are allowed to return," senior Palestinian peace negotiator Saeb Ereikat told reporters when he arrived in Amman on his way to Cairo.

"We hope we will win their support on that and come out with a United Arab stand because only the return of the deportees will salvage the peace process, that was assassinated by (Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak) Rabin himself."

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Palestinian evictees pray outside their tents in South Lebanon Wednesday (AFP photo)

Deputies demand withdrawal from Arab-Israeli peace talks

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The government Wednesday came under fire from members of the Lower House of Parliament who demanded it immediately withdraw from the Arab-Israeli peace talks.

Angered by Israel's expulsion of 415 Palestinians from the Gaza Strip last week, leftist, pan-Arabist and Islamist deputies said the government should abandon what they described as the "surrounding process" which, they said, is only serving the interests of the Jewish state.

Claiming that the government had signed a memorandum of understanding with Israel without informing the House or the people, independent Deputy Hussein Mjalli demanded that the House hold a special session to discuss "this dangerous situation that relates to the future of the nation."

Minister of Education and Deputy Prime Minister Thouman Al Hindawi categorically denied that Jordan had signed such a memorandum, but provoked an angry response from the House when he mistakenly said Parliament has sanctioned Jordan's participation in the peace process.

"The House did not and will not endorse the negotiations" with Israel, spokesman of the Muslim Brotherhood Abdullah Akailah responded, demanding that the minister's statement be based from the House's records.

"In fact, the House has decided against entering the talks and Jordan must immediately withdraw from them because they amount to surrender," Dr. Akailah said.

Some deputies probably means the agenda for the talks by the memorandum of understanding," Mr. Hindawi told the House after Mr. Mjalli made his charge, and emphasised that Jordan had some serious reservations about the agenda which the government had not yet signed.

Jordan and Israel reached a preliminary agreement on a draft agenda for their talks in the seventh round of the peace talks which took place in Washington in August. The document was severely criticised by several political groups and Jordanian negotiators said later they were seeking amendments to some of its articles.

Mr. Hindawi said it was natural for Jordan and Israel to discuss an agenda for their talks.

Leftist Deputy Bassam Haddadin rejected the minister's assurances and demanded explanations for statements by chief Jordanian negotiator Abdul Salam Al Mjalli who, he said, announced that Jordan and Israel had reached a preliminary agreement.

"Where is the government when he (Dr. Mjalli) says that and who authorises him to make such statements," Mr. Haddadin said, demanding a freeze of the peace negotiations until the expelled Palestinians are returned to their homes.

Deputies also criticised Lebanon

(Continued on page 2)

House seeks more government details of Shbeilat-Qarrash case

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Dissatisfied with the government's account of the trial of deputies Leith Shbeilat and Yacoub Qarrash, the Lower House of Parliament has demanded more detailed clarification from the prime minister, while Mr. Shbeilat called on the House to set up a special judiciary committee to conduct a comprehensive investigation of the circumstances of the whole case and trial procedures.

Citing Article 86 of the Constitution, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker sent a brief letter to the House informing it of how the case had progressed from the day the two deputies were arrested in August and early September until they were released under a general amnesty issued by His Majesty King Hussein in November.

The two deputies were sentenced to 20 years of hard labour in November after the State Security Court found them guilty of plotting sedition and other charges.

Some deputies argued that the prime minister's letter fell short of fulfilling his obligation under the Constitution to give the House a detailed account of the case.

Article 86, (Item 2), of the Constitution stipulates that if a parliamentarian is "detained for any reason while the National Assembly is not sitting, the prime minister shall notify the Senate or the Chamber of Deputies when it reassembles of the proceedings which were taken against him, coupled with the necessary explanation."

While some deputies argued that there was no point in discussing the case since it was closed by the general amnesty, the House voted for holding a special session to discuss the affair and a report on it by a special committee it set up to follow it upon the arrest of the two independent

Islamist deputies.

The chairman of the House's Judiciary Committee, Saleem Al Zubi, said the prime minister's letter did not provide "the sufficient explanation" which the Constitution stipulates "while leftist Deputy Bassam Haddadin said "many aspects of the case are still in the dark."

Mr. Haddadin said these aspects have to be clarified so that the people would be assured that justice was served.

Minister of Justice Youssef Musadeen argued that the House had no right to discuss an issue on which the judiciary had passed a verdict and warned against infringing on the jurisdiction of the judiciary. He claimed the House will be violating the Constitution by discussing the case anew.

Attempting to refute arguments that the prime minister is required by the Constitution to provide a detailed account of the case, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs Atef Al Boush said the Constitution requires the

(Continued on page 2)

National Charter's panel members start campaign to reaffirm its principles

By Nermeen Murad
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Several members of the now-dissolved commission which drew up the National Charter are regrouping themselves to contest what they see as the government's "misinterpretation of the letter and spirit" of the charter which they say was manifested in the Interior Ministry's decision not to license three political parties.

Labelling the interior minister's decision not to license the three leftist parties — the Communist Party, the Arab Baath Socialist Party and the Jordan People's Democratic Party — as "undemocratic" and in direct violation of the principles of the National Charter, a nucleus of 10 commission members are organising a larger meeting on Monday.

Although aware that they no longer have a formal mandate, they say that they have a moral obligation to defend the National Charter and its principles and it has prompted them

to come back as a pressure group if only to clarify the thinking which directed the writing of the document, which was formalised 18 months ago.

In a series of interviews with the Jordan Times Wednesday, commission members seemed to agree on the principle of underlining the continued presence of the National Charter in Jordanian politics. They voiced dissatisfaction over the government's implementation of the charter's principles, but differed over how to attribute the blame.

While some members placed all the blame on the government describing it as "invisible" and still stuck in the "pre-democracy mentality," others divided the blame between the government and political forces which ratified the National Charter but failed to incorporate new thinking into their own operations.

The government did not want to respond officially to the accusations against it but Information Minister Mahmoud Sharif, who was also a member of the National Charter commission, said that the panel was dissolved and had no official mandate at this time. He said he was not contacted for the proposed meeting on Monday.

"Why should they make this fuss?" Mr. Sharif said, adding that the commission "has been dissolved; it is non-existent since it has finished its mandate."

The protesting members agree with Mr. Sharif on this particular point and say that they are careful not to behave as if the commission still exists. "We are caught between two fires," one of them said. "On the one hand we do not want to act as if we still have a mandate but we also feel the moral obligation to clarify that the National Charter did not guide the interior minister's decision to ban these parties."

"We are not here to defend a document or ourselves," said Dr. Labib Kamhawi, a member of the commission. "We are here to emphasise and confirm the principles in the document as the common ground between the regime and the political forces," said Mr. Kamhawi, who was also a member of the sub-committee which drafted the chapter on political

(Continued on page 2)

Happy Christmas

The Jordan Times will not be published on Saturday, Dec. 26, on account of the Christmas holiday on Friday, Dec. 25. The next issue of the paper will appear on Sunday, Dec. 27. The Jordan Times wishes its readers and friends a very happy Christmas.

Evictees run out of drinking water, food

MARJ AL ZOHOOR, Lebanon (Agencies) — Palestinians expelled by Israel ran out of clean drinking water Wednesday — their sixth day trapped in no man's land in South Lebanon. Their stocks of food and medicine were also running short.

"It is unbearable," said Zuheir Abdullah, an information officer with a U.N. agency which cares for Palestinian refugees. "They are in a very difficult situation."

Journalists put two ailing Palestinians in cars and drove them out of the camp Wednesday. They were transferred to an ambulance at a Lebanese army checkpoint and taken to hospital.

The Palestinians evacuated were Zuheir Labbabi, 32, with kidney problems, and Ali Abu Ajawi, a schizophrenic.

Lebanese troops are keeping the Palestinians out of government-controlled territory and have turned back all supplies brought by aid agencies, including water, since Monday. "Their drinking water has run out. Now they are only getting water from the stream and boiling it," said Mr. Abdullah, who spent a freezing night with the group. "The food they have is only enough for today."

Mr. Abdullah has asked the authorities to let an ambulance go into the tent camp and stay there on standby.

Israel dumped the 415 Palestinians north of its "security zone" in Lebanon last Tuesday. It says they belong to the Islamic Jihad and the Islamic

Resistance Movement, Hamas, which killed five Israeli soldiers in a week this month.

The United Nations Security Council demands Israel take them back. U.N. Assistant Secretary-General James Jonah is to fly to Israel soon to try to break the deadlock over the evictees.

Lebanon Wednesday reiterated it would not take the 415 Palestinians. Lebanese Foreign Minister Fares Bouez insisted supplies would not pass through government-controlled territory for delivery to the group. "They are Israel's responsibility. All supplies to them should come through Israel," Mr. Bouez told reporters at the Foreign Ministry in Beirut.

In Israel, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres who asked whether the Jewish state would allow food to reach the Palestinians through the Israeli-controlled "security zone" in South Lebanon.

"They are under Lebanese rule and it is really for the Lebanese to decide whether to open or to close the ways needed to support the deportees," he answered.

The evictees, the largest batch of Palestinians expelled by Israel in peacetime, said in a statement they were not surprised when the Israeli high court ruled Tuesday that they are no longer Israel's responsibility. "We emphasise the Israeli court decision has not affected our own decision to stay where we are close to our homeland until we return to our families," they said in a statement.

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Gulf leaders demand Iran withdrawal from islands

ABU DHABI (R) — Gulf Arab states, emerging from a summit that restored their unity after almost three months of crisis, piled pressure on Iran Wednesday to reverse its virtual annexation of a strategic Gulf island.

They issued a statement after a three-day Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) summit saying Iran had to show proof of its good neighbourly intentions by rescinding measures that "rocked Gulf stability and security."

The leaders avoided the Iranian rhetoric of recent statements by Egypt, which engineered a last-minute settlement of a border row between Saudi Arabia and Qatar that allowed all members to attend the summit.

Egypt said its fears about Iranian intentions in the region and Tehran's alleged encouragement of Muslim fundamentalist unrest were largely behind President Hosni Mubarak's mediation.

The GCC statement stressed

that developing relations between the Gulf Arab states and Iran "is linked to enhancing confidence and to measures Iran might take in line with its commitment to the principle of good neighbourliness and the respect of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the region's states."

It denounced Iran's measures on the island of Abu Musa, which it shares with the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and the continued occupation of the Greater and Lesser Tunbs islands.

Iran earlier this year extended its control over Abu Musa beyond a small garrison it established there in 1971 under an agreement with the UAE emirate of Sharjah.

It has since rescinded orders expelling foreigners who worked on the island for the UAE government. But diplomats say it continues to exercise its authority over the whole island, which the UAE sets as virtual annexation.

American killed by landmine in Somalia

MOGADISHU (Agencies) — A U.S. army employee was killed and three other American civilians were wounded by an anti-tank mine Wednesday as they scouted near Bardera, the next destination of the Marines' mission.

The death was the first of an American during the international military operation to deliver food to Somalia's starving. A Bulgarian and a Belgian aid worker have also been killed since the U.S. Marines landed two weeks ago.

The four, three of them State Department security personnel, were on a reconnaissance mission to prepare for a Christmas Eve push into Bardera.

Marine spokesman Colonel Fred Peck told reporters in Mogadishu. He said the army employee was killed instantly.

The wounded were taken to

the USS Tripoli, an amphibious assault ship off the coast, where one was in critical condition and two were listed as stable. A second mine was found nearby. Col. Peck said, but he did not know if the mines were newly laid — and perhaps directed at the foreign troops. Many explosives have been put down by factions involved in the country's civil war.

Roads and trails around Bardera have been mined in recent weeks by the warlord holding the town, Mohammad Said Hirsi, a son-in-law of ousted dictator Mohammad Siad Barre.

Col. Peck said residents are familiar with most of the minefields and have marked safe paths around them.

The Americans "were travelling in an area where we were assumed all known mines were marked," he said.



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Eagleburger calls on Ghali to plan for takeover of Somalia

UNITED NATIONS (Agencies) — U.S. Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger Tuesday called for a surprise visit to Secretary-General Boutros Ghali, urging him to plan quickly for replacements of U.S. troops in Somalia.

Diplomats close to the talks, which came a day after the U.N. chief again criticised the United States for its reluctance to fully disarm Somali gunmen, described them as cooperative, and without ransom.

In a Monday report to the Security Council, Dr. Ghali again called for a wider and longer U.S. role in Somalia and said Washington should disarm warlords and gunmen in all regions of the country.

He also refused to offer a timeframe for when U.N. peacekeepers could take over from the American-led task force, fearing that a smaller U.N. operation would be faced with chaos if Washington pulled out troops too soon.

At the meeting with Mr. Eagleburger, Dr. Ghali outlined his difficulties and lack of resources in creating the type of force necessary to replace the U.S.-led troops.

In turn, Mr. Eagleburger and other U.S. officials offered their help in planning and offered to leave behind some American troops, possibly a logistics unit, some headquarters staff and Marines based on offshore vessels with assault capability, the envoys said.

But the diplomats noted that the United States stood its ground on how extensively they planned to disarm combatants and where vague on whether American troops would fan out to northern Somalia rather than mainly in the south.

Mr. Eagleburger presumably wanted to speak to Mr. Ghali before the U.N. chief left on a European and African tour.

Like President George Bush, Dr. Ghali also intends to visit Somalia early in January, either before or after he attends a meeting of Somali factions in Ethiopia on Dec. 4.

In his report to the Security Council, Mr. Ghali said "it would be a tragedy if the premature, departure, or remodeling of the (U.S.-led) unified task force were to plunge Somalia back into anarchy and starvation and destroy the fragile political progress of recent weeks."

The first U.S. troops landed in the Somalia on Dec. 9 to keep relief supplies for thousands of starving Somalis from falling into the hands of armed looters.

Washington wanted Dr. Ghali to plan for the transition to a U.N. peacekeeping force, which

would closely resemble the American-led operation.

But he said in his report this approach held a "daunting prospect, namely the first peace-enforcement operation to be carried out under United Nations command."

The U.N. chief, however, did propose an expanded U.N. peacekeeping operation that would be mandated to use firepower. He contended U.N. resources could not match the size and power of the American forces.

Alluding to the strains between Washington and the United Nations, Mr. Eagleburger was "bringing the secretary general up to date on the issues that obviously must continue to be talked about," U.S. Ambassador Edward Perkins said.

"The United States has said that the disarming will be done in accordance" only with the protection of the humanitarian effort, Mr. Perkins said, showing that Mr. Eagleburger disagreed with Dr. Ghali's belief that all factions should be disarmed as a matter of policy.

They also discussed the Serb-initiated crisis in Bosnia, but Mr. Eagleburger did not present any new initiatives, Mr. Perkins said. Mr. Eagleburger made a similar visit last month to Dr. Ghali, carrying Mr. Bush's permission to have U.S. Marines lead the relief operation. His return indicated how seriously Washington took Dr. Ghali's recommendations.

Marine Colonel Fred Peck, military spokesman for Operation Restore Hope, said Tuesday the total of the U.S. forces would be cut by an unspecified number.

Operational commander General Robert Johnston had made "a firm commitment on scaling back the amount of U.S. forces that are going to be needed," Col. Peck said.

"We've basically turned the tap and closed off the flow of forces from the United States," he told reporters in Mogadishu.

Col. Peck said so many other countries had offered to join the force, expected to total 35,000 soldiers from more than a dozen states, that fewer American combat troops would be needed.

He also made it clear the task force was facing less resistance than expected from the feuding clan militias whose civil war has plunged Somalia into anarchy and from the armed bandits who have looted food relief.

The first phase to secure Mogadishu and seven towns in Somalia's central and southern famine belt for the relief drive was two weeks ahead of schedule after just two weeks on the ground

Bush to visit U.S. forces in Somalia

WASHINGTON (AP) — President George Bush will visit the U.S. forces in Somalia over new year's, the White House announced Tuesday.

"The president's visit will demonstrate United States concern for the people of Somalia, our commitment to humanitarian assistance and our support for American and United Nations forces," White House Press Secretary Marlin Fitzwater said.

Mr. Bush will depart the United States on Dec. 30 and arrive on Dec. 31 in time to spend New Year's Eve with U.S. troops, Mr. Fitzwater said.

He will visit relief operations in Somalia on New Year's Day and depart the country that evening, Mr. Fitzwater said.

Mr. Bush ordered 28,000 U.S. forces into Somalia earlier this month on a military humanitarian mission of unprecedented magnitude.

They have led United Nations troops now spreading across the impoverished country, where 350,000 people have died since a January 1991 coup threw Somalia into lawlessness.

The operation began Dec. 9 when the first U.S. Marines landed at Mogadishu.

Mr. Bush plans to spend Christmas weekend at the presidential retreat at Camp David, then is headed to Texas on Dec. 20 for a three-day hunting trip.

Mr. Fitzwater said Mr. Bush was expected to stop in Washington on Dec. 30 before heading to Africa, possibly just long enough to pick up aides.

Mr. Bush's wife Barbara said recently they were interested in going to Somalia, but not if it would interfere with relief operations.

Mr. Bush, in a televised address to the nation Dec. 4 announcing the operation, said, "The people of Somalia need our help. We must help them live. We must give them hope. America must act."

"In taking this action I want to emphasize that I understand the United States alone cannot right the world's wrongs. But we also know that some crises in the world cannot be resolved without American involvement," he said.

The head of CARE urged Mr. Bush last week to go to Somalia to see for himself the devastation wrought by nearly two years of civil warfare.

The presidential mission will recall a dramatic visit that French President Francois Mitterrand paid to besieged Sarajevo in former Yugoslavia last June.

Exchange of land part of Saudi-Qatar deal

ABU DHABI (R) — A border deal agreed by Saudi Arabia and Qatar involves the exchange of about 250 square kilometres of territory and restores the disputed border post of Khofous to Qatar, Gulf diplomats said.

Speaking on the margin of a Gulf Arab summit that was saved by the deal, the diplomats said Qatar conceded territory to the Saudis along the northern end of the border close to the Saudi town of Salwa.

The Saudis conceded territory in the south that included the Khofous post, scene of a bloody border clash on Sept. 30 in which three people died, the diplomats said.

The official Saudi Press Agency quoted an official source as saying the Reuters report on the deal was "distorted and untrue," but he did not elaborate.

There was no reaction from Qatar.

The diplomats said the land exchanged was marked on a map that was attached to the agree-

ment engineered by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and signed in the Holy City of Medina Sunday.

The agreement prompted Qatar to end a boycott of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) regional alliance and attend the summit that opened Monday.

Under the agreement, physical border demarcation would be completed on the ground within one year, possibly with the help of foreign surveyors, the diplomats said.

Saudi Arabia said at the time of the clash that Khofous, where Qatar built a border post in 1990, was 14 kilometres within Saudi territory.

The diplomats said the deal left Saudi Arabia in control of the bulk of territory along the southern border which was ceded to Riyadh by the United Arab Emirates a few years ago. This included the Hor Al Udaid creek where Saudi Arabia was building a small naval base.

House seeks more details on case

(Continued from page 1)

prime minister to inform the House of proceedings to the "detention and not trial of deputies." Since deputies Qarash and Shbeilat were tried in a court of law," he said, Article 88 is not applicable in their case.

The arguments of the ministers — who were supported by some deputies — however, failed to convince the House which insisted it was constitutionally entitled to a full account of the case by the prime minister.

In a letter to House Speaker Abdul Latif Arabiyat Wednesday Mr. Shbeilat said since the letter of the prime minister is going to be a document of the House, "I believe it is my

right to highlight my right in writing so that my letter will be a document of the House too."

Expressing "appreciation to His Majesty the King" for issuing the general pardon, Mr. Shbeilat said that his objective of demanding a thorough investigation of his trial aims at using the findings for correcting any imbalances that might deny people a fair trial.

"I am asking for this investigation not only to clear my name from the (verdict of the trial) but also to (ensure) that the legislative and judicial authorities will use the findings of the judiciary committee to correct any imbalances that might be exposed, guarantee a fair trial for all citizens and provide a minimum level of immunity to a deputy so that he

Deputies demand pullout from peace talks

(Continued from page 1)

for not allowing aid supplies to reach the Palestinians and they reproached the Jordanian government for banning demonstrations expressing support for the evictees.

Former Prime Minister Taher Al Masri said the House had taken appropriate measures to rally support for the evictees, pointing out that the House had called for an emergency meeting of the Arab Parliamentary Union.

Some deputies proposed that a delegation visit the Palestinians in their camp in South Lebanon but Mr. Masri explained that the Lebanese government had refused entry to public delegations which wanted to visit the group on the "acceptable grounds" that such a move would suggest that the expelled Palestinians had become a Lebanese responsibility.

"That is why no aid supplies or delegations were dispatched to the expelled Palestinians," Mr. Masri said.

Other deputies, however, said that

while they understand the Lebanese government's decision not to assume responsibility for the Palestinians, they believed that food and other supplies should be provided to them.

"What is happening in Lebanon is a testimony to the impotence of the Arabs and the conspiracy of the international community," Islamist Deputy Ali Al Faghi said, adding that the Palestinians were expelled because they represent a political trend that opposes the "surrender process."

Member of the Democratic Alliance Bloc Husni Shihab criticised the government for banning demonstrations in support of the Palestinians but Minister of Interior Jawdat Shouk said the government only prohibited marches that could have posed a threat to foreign diplomatic missions in the country.

He said his ministry had given instructions to governors to study applications for organising demonstrations each on its own merit, adding that the government has not banned any "disciplined and well-arranged march."

During the heated debate that started towards the end of the session, deputies expressed dissatisfaction, with measures taken by Arab countries against the Israeli expulsion

Panel members launch campaign

(Continued from page 1)

plurality and parties in the charter. Dr. Kamhawi, who interpreted the reiteration of the charter's principles as a message to the government and its different institutions, was not necessarily reflecting the opinion of other members who felt that the charter's principles were not also respected by political parties which still insisted on maintaining their "constitutional, one-party system."

Taher Hikmat, a prominent lawyer and member of the commission, told the Jordan Times that the National Charter was a document aimed at "national reconciliation" to open the door for political pluralism but also to give political parties guidelines that should have been incorporated into their manifestos.

"Some of our parties suffer from lack of mobility and political constipation," Mr. Hikmat said, adding that it was about time that these parties reflected the opinion of other members who felt that the charter's principles were not also respected by political parties which still insisted on maintaining their "constitutional, one-party system."

Mr. Hikmat, who once served as minister of transport and information under former Prime Minister Ahmad Obaidat, said that the efforts of those calling for the revival of the charter would not be aimed at creating a confrontation with the government but at "encouraging it to be more trusting of the political forces in the country."

"I think that the regime has been unable to deliver the message to its different institutions and elements that democracy is here to stay," Mr. Hikmat said. "Some people (in the government) still think it is a tactic and therefore are not taking it seriously enough."

On these two final points — the need for the government to trust the different political forces and democratic principles — Mr. Hikmat views are similar to those of the more critical members of the commission who had laid all the blame on the government.

Ms. Mona Shuqair, a columnist at Al Dustour and former member of the commission, said that it was this feeling of lack of trust that the Ministry of Interior had prompted it to deny the election.

"We in the commission established that the rule is that political parties are licensed and licences can be revoked if in practice it became apparent that these parties did not comply," Ms. Shuqair told the Jordan Times.

"What happened was the Ministry

of Interior took a shortcut in its decision based on the views of those parties," she said, "evident that the ministry is by the 'martial-law' method not understood the new democracy."

Dr. Kamhawi, who argued that the deal with the application of the political parties was not a "political cancer" would go "him."

Jamal Taher, who was a member of the commission, said he was "interested in the commission to reaffirm its commitment to the government and political parties which were licensed to participate in the election."

Although less critical of the deal than Mr. Hikmat, Mr. Taher said that they should be tense to fear of a democratic experiment. He called the commission's meeting to avoid tension, spill over onto the street.

While describing the interior minister's decision as "a dialogue in commission members could the tension and allow the which will be looking into it of the minister's decision, in a quiet atmosphere of suspicion and accusations."

Some of the commission members expected to meet a former president, Mr. Ghazi, Wednesday evening to framework for their meeting pinpoint their objectives, tracing their former colleagues' commission.

Anti-Iraq group threatens Turkish assembly

ANKARA (R) — The extended presence of a Western air strike force based in Turkey to protect Iraqi Kurds from Baghdad threatens to cause a parliamentary split during a vote Thursday.

Four small but vociferous opposition parties objected to a government proposal to extend for a further six months from Jan. 1 the mandate of the force operating from southern Incirlik air-base.

"I would not come before you if I had the slightest doubt that (the presence of the force) was detrimental to Turkey's interests," Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel told parliament on Wednesday.

The main opposition Motherland Party said it would give conditional approval if the mandate was cut back to three months during which Turkey sought a comprehensive international agreement on the deployment.

But party Chairman Mesut Yilmaz said his 96 deputies would vote no if Motherland's condition

was not accepted. Many MPs say the prolonged presence of the U.S., French and British strike force in Turkey without the benefit of a U.N. Security Council resolution impinges on Turkey's sovereign rights.

Ankara has sanctioned the force, code-named Provide Comfort, under bilateral agreements with the three allies.

Mr. Demirel's True Path Party has 182 seats and his Social Democrat Populist Party (SHP) coalition partners hold 52. They can muster a simple majority in the 450-seat house provided there is little or no dissent in their ranks.

Eighteen deputies of the pro-Kurdish People's Labour Party are also expected to give them support.

The fundamentalist Welfare Party with 40 seats, the 21-strong Republican Peoples Party, 13 deputies of the Nationalist Labour Party, three members of the Democratic Left Party and some

15 deputies from the SHP are expected to vote no. Foreign Minister Hikmet Cetin met party leaders Tuesday to drum up support to extend the mandate.

The force was created last year after Western coalition forces repatriated 500,000 Iraqi Kurds who fled the Iraqi army after a failed post-Gulf war rebellion against the government.

Opponents want to know when the Western strike force is going to leave.

"Possibilities of conflict exist in many parts of the world but for none of them is there a standing force like this," Mr. Yilmaz said.

Critics say the presence of the force encouraged the announcement of a federated Kurdish state in November and could inspire a declaration of Kurdish sovereignty.

This is anathema to Ankara, fighting a separatist Kurdish insurgency north of the Iraqi border that has killed about 5,300 people since 1984.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

Retired policeman killed in Algeria

ALGIERS (R) — A retired policeman was stabbed and shot dead as he made his way to a mosque, Algerian radio reported Wednesday. It quoted police sources as saying the man was attacked in Medea, 60 kilometres south of Algiers Tuesday. More than 200 policemen or gendarmes have been killed since February in attacks or ambushes, officially attributed to the banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS).

Quake rocks western Turkish province

ISTANBUL (R) — An earthquake measuring four on the Richter scale rocked the western Turkish province of Kutahya early Wednesday. The semi-official Anatolia news agency said there were no reports of casualties or damage. The Kandilli observatory said the epicentre of the quake was 210 kilometres from Istanbul.

Petrol bombs damage Istanbul banks

ISTANBUL (R) — Petrol bombs tossed at three banks in Istanbul caused minor damage but no casualties, the semi-official Anatolia news agency reported Wednesday. The agency, quoting police sources, said the bombs exploded outside three banks in the suburb of Sirinever Tuesday night. Police suspected the attacks were carried out by Dev-Sol, a leftist urban guerrilla group. Dev-Sol has claimed responsibility for several attacks on banks in recent months.

Algeria, Mali sign agreement on refugees

ALGIERS (R) — Algeria and Mali have signed a draft agreement for the return to their homes of thousands of refugees who fled fighting in northern Mali between Malian soldiers and nomadic tuaregs. The Algerian news agency APS said the agreement had the financial backing of the International Agricultural Development Fund (FIDA). It would facilitate "the return and the socio-economic reintegration of displaced populations originating from Mali," APS added. It was signed Tuesday in Tamanrasset, in the southernmost part of Algeria, by the Algerian minister of the interior, Mohammed Hardi and his Mali counterpart, Mohammed Lamini Traore, in the presence of FIDA president Idries A. Djazairi. The exact number of Malian refugees in southern Algeria has never been officially stated, but Algerian press reports have put the figure at about 25,000. FIDA is reported to have put aside \$18 million for the financing of various projects in northern Mali.

S. Arabia to deport 2 Philippine preachers

RIYADH (AP) — The Philippine ambassador said Wednesday two Filipinos arrested for preaching Christianity in Saudi Arabia will be deported, flatly denying reports that they had been sentenced to death. The ambassador, Abraham Rasul, said he met Wednesday with Prince Salman Ben Abdul Aziz, the governor of Riyadh, to discuss the fate of the men, who according to Manila were arrested Oct. 14. Manila said Oswald Magdangal and Renato Posedio were accused of trying to build a church and spread Christianity in Riyadh. Their relatives said Tuesday in the Philippines that the two men would be executed on Christmas Day, and President Fidel Ramos asked the Philippine embassy to appeal to King Fahd to spare their lives. "The report (of execution) is not correct," said the ambassador in a brief telephone contact with the Associated Press. He spoke after the meeting with Prince Salman. "Prince Salman told me they will be deported," the ambassador said. "That offense is not worth execution. The penalty is deportation." An estimated half a million Filipinos work in the Middle East.

Algeria to demolish militants' mosques

ALGIERS (AP) — The government has promised to demolish places to worship allegedly used as meeting places for Muslim militants fighting in a nearly year-old insurgency. Algeria's minister for religious affairs, Sassi Lamouri, described the "mosques," or places of prayer, as "nests for extremists" that are usually basements or shanties. "We will not allow the mosques used by murderers who don't hesitate to kill to come to power," Mr. Lamouri said in an interview with the official Algerian news agency APS.

JORDAN TELEVISION	
Tel: 773111-19	
PROGRAMME TWO	
17:30	Imogene
19:00	News in French
19:15	Les Images du l'histoire
19:30	News in Hebrew
20:00	News in Arabic
20:30	Golden Girls
21:00	Civil Wars
22:00	News in English
22:30	Movie of the week: "Theory Lady"
23:00	Ballad: "The Nut Cracker"
PRAYER TIMES	
05:05	Fajr
06:37	(Sunrise) Duha
11:34	Dhuhr
14:18	'Asr
16:41	Maghrib
18:44	Isha
CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swetish Tel. 810740	
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 637285	
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440	
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757	
Teresian Church Tel. 622566	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541	
Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 626543	
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331	
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261	
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751	
Armenian International Church Tel. 627981, 685326	
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295	
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 623624 and 654932	
Church of the Nazarene Tel. 675691	
WEATHER	
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology	
It will be cold, cloudy and rainy with snow expected to fall on high mountains with 900 metres above sea level. Winds will be westerly moderate to fresh. In Aqaba, it will be partly cloudy and rain is expected to fall. Winds will be southerly moderate and seas rough.	
Min./max. temp.	
Amman	02/6
Aqaba	6/15
Deserts	1/8
Jordan Valley	6/13
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 10, Aqaba 20. Humidity readings: Amman 71 per cent, Aqaba 43 per cent.	

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Salim Al Daboubi 776551
Dr. Ramzi Mazawi 894788
Dr. Basam Kradshah 766200
Dr. Saad Ali 788285
Firas pharmacy 661912
Perdous pharmacy 776356
Al Asma pharmacy 674055
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Al Salami pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shimouni pharmacy 637660
Najib pharmacy 847632

EMERGENCIES

Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Emergency 630341
Rescue Police 199
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Department 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewage Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Radio Jordan 774111
Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 772111
ZABQA: Dr. Fawaz Handalah 903644
Al Qawas pharmacy 985417

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 81381/352
Khald Maternity, J. Amn. 644281/6
Akil Maternity, J. Amn. 644212
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Mathis, J. Amman 636140
Palsine, Samisani 641714
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845
Al-Mushar Hospital 6672279
Al-Hilal, Abdali 66612757
Italian, Al-Mubajjar 661646
Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh 77511126
Army, Marka 845845
Queen Alia Hospital 60224950
ZABQA: Zarga Govi Hospital 674155
Zarga National Hospital 09790560

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (09)3200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:15 Singapore, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)
07:15 Doha, Muscat (RJ)
09:15 Riyadh (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

12:40 Muscat, Abu Dhabi (GF)
13:00 Riyadh (SU)
16:35 Istanbul (TK)
17:00 Doha (EA)
18:00 London, Berlin (RJ)
18:25 Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
20:00 Bangkok, Calcutta (RJ)
20:10 Rome (RJ)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:15 Beirut (RJ)
11:00 Rome (RJ)
11:15 Montreal, Toronto (RJ)
12:00 Paris (RJ)
12:10 Athens (RJ)
12:20 Larnaca, Athens (RJ)
20:30 Jeddah (RJ)
20:35 Bahrain Doha (RJ)
21:

Home News

JORDAN TIMES, THURSDAY-FRIDAY, DECEMBER 24-25, 1992 3

Martial court ruling thrown out by civilian court

By Elia Nasrallah
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A criminal court ruling, the first of its kind in Jordan's history, has vindicated a Jordanian lawyer Ahmad Muheisen from his alleged part in a fraud and embezzlement case for which he was sentenced by a martial court for three years in jail in 1982.

"I am quite happy at the criminal court ruling and I now intend to clear my name at all levels," Mr. Muheisen told the Jordan Times.

"I have spent three years in jail for no crime and was forced to pay a fine of JD 17,000 because I was unjustly accused," he said. "Actually I was called to the stand as a witness in the case but

abruptly and for no reason that I was aware of I was accused of embezzling JD 8000 when I was serving as a government employee with the Jordan Valley Authority," said Mr. Muheisen.

"The court sentenced me to three years in jail from 1982 until 1985, but when I was discharged I made it my business to clear my name and regain rehabilitation in society," he said.

The Jordan News Agency, Petra, earlier reported that the criminal court in Amman reversed a ruling by the martial court issued on June 17, 1982 convicting Mr. Muheisen of embezzlement. A statement said that he was vindicated in the so-called "tomato case" which involved the marketing of tomato at Al Arida centre.

The criminal court ruling came after a new law that abolished the martial law in Jordan and lifted any responsibility of people involved in cases during the martial law mandate that lasted from 1967 and until February 1992.

According to Petra, a Royal Decree issued in February this year scrapped the martial law in Jordan. Petra quoted the criminal court ruling as saying that Mr. Muheisen produced official documents proving that the JD 8,000 which was alleged to have been embezzled by Mr. Muheisen had in fact been delivered to the Al Arida fund and had been entered into the official records.

Soon after his discharge from prison in 1985, Mr. Muheisen embarked on campaign to clear

his name. He said that he gathered all the official documents to prove his innocence and enlisted the help of Parliament members and ministers to see to it that the criminal court re-examine the case and declare his innocence officially now that the martial rule is not applicable any more and civilian courts are in charge of all cases.

"Within one week I will have the official statement of the criminal court which proves my innocence and then I will publish everything in detail in the local press," Mr. Muheisen said.

Asked about his demands, he said that he wants his civil rights reinstated, official rehabilitation in society and a full clearance of his name.

Three liberal parties unite to form Waed

By Mariam M. Shahin
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Three liberal parties merged Wednesday to form the Unionist Arab Democratic Party or Waed which will apply for official party status with the Ministry of Interior next week.

Waed which means 'promise' in Arabic consists of the Union Liberals, the Arab Union and Democratic Union parties. The three former heads of the parties addressed a group of some 75 members and representatives of other parties to officially announce their union.

All three founders as well as all 15 members of the Waed's executive committee are members of the "list of 70" Jordanian personalities who had joined together in an attempt to form a centrist political coalition in September 1990.

Composed mostly of industrialists and private sector businessmen, the group appears to have a wide geographic base. It consists of people from all parts of Jordan, including several of West Bank origin. Three of the group's 15 executive committee members are Christians.

Waed is the second party and second coalition of parties to emerge from the "list of 70." Earlier this year, the Mustakbal Party emerged from the list after uniting three centrist parties. The Mustakbal Party applied for legal registration in October and received notice of its legalisation from the Ministry of Interior earlier this month.

Waed distinguished itself at the press conference by bringing up issues such as the protection of the environment as part of their main political charter. The Party Executive Secretary Anis Muasher told the press conference that the party had three pillars which were "Jordanian in foundation, democratic in practice and Arab in character."

The unity of the Jordanian and Palestinian people as well as pluralism, respect for free speech and a free market economy were also stressed during the conference.

Some political observers are describing the new party as one of the most liberal to apply for recognition. Party founders said that the refusal of the Ministry of Interior to grant legal status to three left-wing parties earlier this month was regrettable. "I believe

in respect for the law," said Mr. Muasher, "but I think that the points involved could have been settled between the ministry and the party founders and their would have been no need to refuse legalisation."

Another party executive Mohammad Oran, formerly head of the Democratic Union, said he hoped that "at this stage the government would see it fit to allow all parties to become legal — especially the old known ones."

"The Baath Party, in particular, has wide ranging support on the streets of Jordan," said Mr. Oran. The group said they support the Arab-Israeli peace process in principle but would not condone any agreement which falls short of applying international law and U.N. resolutions "in full."

During the press conference, the group said it condemned the deportation of some 415 Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip to South Lebanon and asked that the deportees be allowed to return immediately.

While the group's founders are mostly upper middle class business people one of the party's

advisors, Sami Gammo, said he hoped that a wide-ranging popular base would be formed. "The group appeals to the man in the street in that it represents his aspirations and his political stand and opinion and thus the party should be able to get wide-ranging support," said Mr. Gammo.

Mr. Gammo urged more centrist parties to merge and form a larger coalition that would make "a difference at the polls."

When Waed applies for legal status next week it will be the 12th party to have done so. So far five have received legal status while three, the Jordanian Communist Party, the Arab Baath Socialist Party and the Jordan People's Democratic Party have been denied legal status.

Members of Waed's executive committee are: Anis Muasher, Talal Omari, Mohammad Al Oran, Abdul Rahman Toukan, Mohammad Fadel Al Taher, Shabbab Al Odat, Wasif Azer, Hani Kaddoura, Hisham Al Zagh, Mohammad Awamleh, Mahmoud Al Abdullat, Kamal Kakish, Bassam Mayia, Mohammad Nahas and Ismat Abu Hantash.

Italian aid arrives

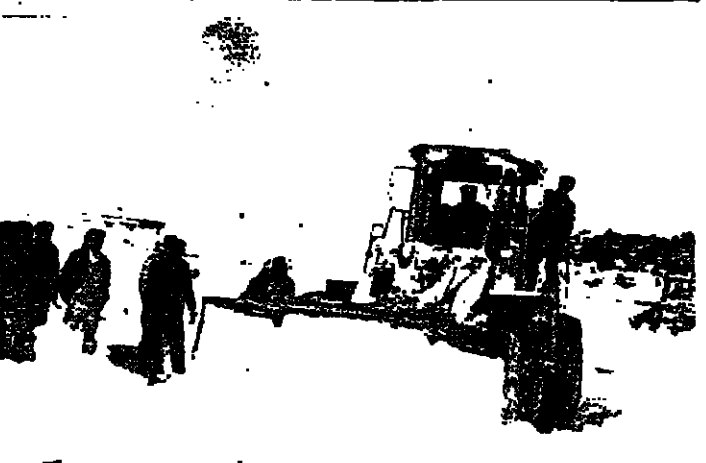
AMMAN (J.T.) — A plane load of food and medical supplies arrived at Amman airport Wednesday as a gift from the Italian people to Jordan.

The head of the Italian peace group Ernesto Oliviero, who arrived on the flight, said in a statement that the Italian president ordered that the gift be sent to the poor in Jordan as a token of friendship.

Mr. Oliviero said that contributions were collected from Italian families and have also been sent to the people of Somalia and

Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Mr. Oliviero, one of the leading peace activists in Italy, received from His Majesty King Hussein the Jordanian Al Kawkab Medal of the First Order last year in recognition of his humanitarian services around the world. The gift will be distributed through the Ministry of Social Development and Caritas, which has contributed to the services of the nearly one million evacuees, the Iraqi nationals living in Jordan and the expatriates returning from Kuwait.



Emergency teams at work clearing snow last winter

Medical care centres increase in Irbid

DEIR ABI SAEED (Petra) — Work is going ahead with sufficient speed to finish a 66-bed hospital at the Kurra district in the Irbid Governorate to meet the medical services to the local population according to Dr. Jamal Sharman, health department director in Amman.

Dr. Sharman said that work on the hospital, which will cost JD 3 million, began in June 1992. The Department of Health runs five health centres and two dentist clinics in the area along with four maternity and child care centres.

These, however, are not sufficient to cope with the growing medical needs, said Dr. Sharman.

The Ministry of Health has also given its consent to open two laboratories and another mother and child care centre in the area at the cost of JD90,000.

Dr. Sharman said that the 66-bed hospital could be expanded to over 100 in the future, and he appealed to local councils and municipalities to offer the health department plots of land for possible expansion.

Weather emergency teams on standby

AMMAN (Petra) — In view of the coming snow storm as forecast by the Department of Meteorology, the Civil Defence Department announced Wednesday that in emergencies its operations room can be reached at the following telephone numbers: 882133, 882177, 613171, 613173, 613176, 629601, 692602 and fax number 892713.

Heads of emergency committees in various governorates held meetings with their department officials and local civil defence departments to discuss emergency services in stormy weather that would require immediate and urgent help to people stranded on the roads or whose homes are flooded with rain water.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education Thouqan Hindawi announced the creation of special operations rooms and emergency teams of scouts to deal with emergencies. He also said that special arrangements

have been made for the school hours in the event of storms affecting roads and transportation.

Special teams have been put in charge of schools which have been provided with special telephone lines linked to the central emergency room at the Ministry of Education. In each governorate, scouts and girl guides have been grouped into special emergency teams provided with special first aid equipment and medicines and means for carrying out rescue operations in cooperation with the civil defence. Emergency teams are to be on standby around the clock.

The Meteorology Department said that as of Thursday snow will fall on various areas of Jordan of 900 metres above sea level as a result of a low depression centred over Cyprus. Gale force winds with snow and hail will fall Thursday and frost will be formed Friday evening.

Workshop on drugs to end after four days

AMMAN (J.T.) — The workshop on drugs and their uses organised by the Ministry of Health and the World Health Organisation is due to conclude Thursday with the presentation of graduation certificates. Fifty physicians and pharmacists from the Kingdom have participated in the workshop which aimed to improve the control and use of essential drugs.

Jordan, Lebanon sign protocol

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordanian and Lebanese industrialists and businessmen wound up talks in Amman Wednesday by signing a protocol setting up a joint committee on economic cooperation.

The protocol signed by Khalid Abu Hassan, president of the Amman Chamber of Industry, and Jack Sarraf, chairman of the Lebanese businessmen association, groups six representatives from each side and will meet regularly every six months in Amman and Beirut.

The agreement, concluded just before the Lebanese team's departure paves the ground for a greater measure of cooperation between the two sides, said a chamber official.

The Lebanese team had started formal talks Saturday by first meeting with Industry and Trade Minister Abdullah Ensour to discuss scopes of cooperation in economic and trade fields and joint investments. Discussion also covered the implementation of a Lebanese-Jordanian trade protocol signed last October in Amman.

The protocol lists types of national Jordanian and Lebanese products that could be exchanged with no customs duty.

The chamber official said that the agreement provides for the two sides to exchange expertise and information, hold training seminars, discuss investment opportunities in either of the two countries and encourage trade exchange. The protocol also covers the organisation of industrial fairs in Beirut and Amman, joint efforts to open markets abroad for national products and initiating joint ventures.

Handicrafts displayed for Christmas

By Ica Wahbeh
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Now that the winter fetes are here and one is at a loss for what gifts to buy the dear ones, it seems like a wonderful idea to pay a visit to the bazaar organised by the Jordan Design and Trade Centre of the Noor Al Hussein Foundation.

The bazaar, initially organised for three-days but prolonged for two more because of its success, is an Alti Baba cave with goodies that could easily tempt even the most demanding tastes.

Delicately-embroidered cushions, bold-coloured carpets, subdued-toned pottery, brilliantly blown glass, rugs, curtains, wallets, handbags, glasses and key holders, quilts and an array of things for ornamental purposes vie for attention.

The centre, supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), was established in order to revitalise the handicraft industry in the Kingdom. It aims at preserving tradition and at creating income-generating projects to help rural women supplement their families' earnings.

Providing assistance to 32 handicraft groups and individuals, the centre has a business-oriented, marketing approach to production. Project staff first evaluate production skills and locally produced raw materials; experienced commercial designers are then engaged to create marketable products based on Jordan's diverse cultural heritage; once a small nucleus of crafts people in each group is identified, intensive training begins to improve management and product quality and to meet the expecta-



Traditional costumes from Jordan

tions of the market.

Based on the demand for their products, more producers can be trained and the core group expanded. This approach has ensured the projects' success and helped sales both locally and abroad. It also was a sure way to preserve handicraft tradition once in danger of dying out.

Besides local outlets, like Kan Zaman or the duty-free shop, the centre has representatives in the U.S. and Europe where it already presented its products. Two exhibitions were held in July and September in Atlanta, Georgia, and Paris respectively. They brought the centre \$40,000 to \$50,000, according to David O'Connor, co-director of the project.

It may sound little, but the project is in its second year and helping Jordan's economy. It helps develop the Kingdom's handicraft projects and cast a beautiful image of the country abroad.

Fitna Kalaji, the project manager, stressing on the group targeted by the project, regions with population in need of help, said that beneficiaries of the project stood at 2,000.

Besides helping create employment and increasing wages among low-income communities, particularly women, the centre provides a variety of market-related services to handicraft producers as well as to local and international buyers. The latter are able to place orders for existing merchandise or to develop their own exclusive lines, always based on Jordan's traditional handicraft.

Dr. Sima Bahous, of the Noor Al Hussein Foundation, put the centre's future in a nutshell saying: "In the long-run, the centre's products will bring returns, helping Jordan's economy. It helps develop the Kingdom's handicraft projects and cast a beautiful image of the country abroad."

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Regent sends condolences to Libya

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, sent Wednesday a cable to Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi expressing Jordan's condolences over the death of 158 people in an air crash Tuesday.

Jordan's U.N. ambassador talks to officials in Geneva

GENEVA (R) — Jordan's United Nations Ambassador in Geneva Sharif Fawwaz Sharaf met Tuesday with U.N. Assistant Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Director of the Geneva-based Human Rights Centre Anton Bianca. Sharif Fawwaz discussed with Mr. Bianca the situation of Palestinian citizens in the Israeli-occupied Arab territories and the deportation of more than 400 Palestinians to Lebanon by the occupation forces. He discussed the issue also with officials at the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), highlighting at the meetings the legal and humanitarian aspects of the deportation process.

Foreign cold trucks banned from loading in Jordan

AMMAN (Petra) — Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Transport Ali Suheimat Wednesday issued a decision banning foreign refrigerated trucks from being loaded with goods inside Jordan. The decision also bars foreign refrigerated trucks from leaving Jordanian border posts while loaded unless they are carrying a special permit by the Ministry of Transport. The decision takes effect as of Jan. 1, 1993 and is designed to promote local transport companies.

JUST president meets new student council

RAMTHA (Petra) — President of the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST) Kamel Al Ajlouni met Wednesday with the university's recently-elected students council. Dr. Ajlouni urged members of the council to cooperate in serving the university's students and in organising useful activities for them. The university president underlined the importance of objective dialogue which is based on respecting the freedom of expression, and pointed to the democratic atmosphere which prevailed during the election of the council. He stressed the university's readiness to support the council and all its activities.

Computer lab opened at University of Jordan

AMMAN (Petra) — A computer laboratory was opened Wednesday at the University of Jordan's Engineering and Technology Faculty. The \$65,000 laboratory was financed by the United States Agency for International Developments (USAID).

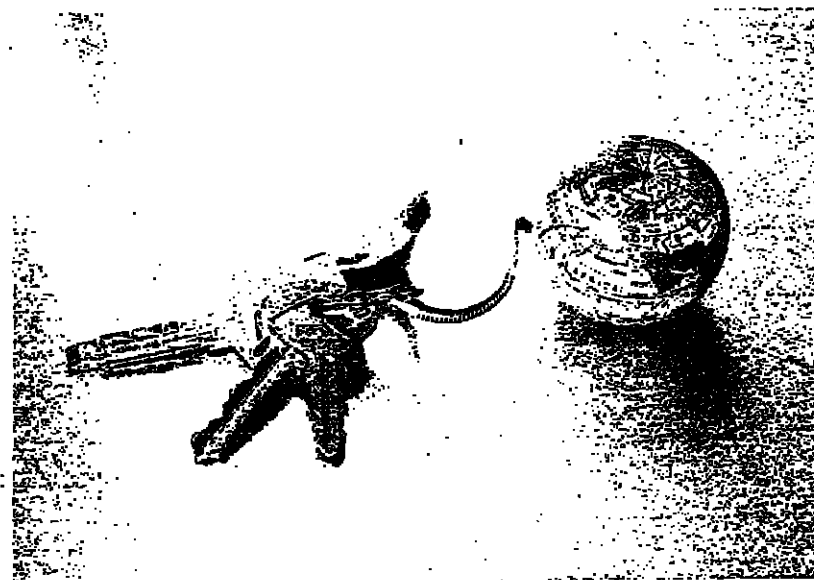
WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- Sculpture exhibition by Mona Saudi at Al Balka Art Gallery in Al Fabeis.
- An exhibition of ceramics by the Jordanian artist Mahmoud Fatah at Alla Art Gallery.
- Exhibition of paintings by Samer Ousama at the French Cultural Centre.
- Exhibition of paintings and silkscreen by three artists from Ram Fayed Al Hasani, Kamel Al Mughanni and Laila Shawa at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation Gallery (10 a.m. - 8 p.m.).
- Exhibition by Iraqi artist Shaker Hassan Al Saeed at the Jordan Gallery of Fine Arts.
- Exhibition of paintings by artist Kamal Al Jawhari at Housing Bank Complex Art Gallery.
- Exhibition of arts by Iraqi artist Mohammad Hussein Judi and Shawkat Al Alousi, at the Royal Cultural Centre.

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Time for peace

IT IS Christmas time once again, a joyous occasion for Christians worldwide to celebrate and rejoice in with renewed hopes and aspirations for the new year and the future. We express not only special greetings to our fellow Christian Jordanians on this happy occasion, but also our gratitude and appreciation for their continued and valued contributions to the country and its welfare and prosperity.

Our rejoice cannot be complete, however, since the Holy Land, the birthplace of Jesus Christ, is still denied the kind of peace and stability that the entire world has been yearning for. The worldwide celebrations associated with the Christmas season are shadowed by the perennial sufferings of the Palestinians as well as by the sufferings of other peoples all over the world.

As long as blood continues to flow in former Yugoslavia, Somalia or Cambodia, and oppression and denial of basic human rights perpetuates in other corners of the world, no true rejoice can fill the hearts of the believers.

Christmas, therefore, is not just an occasion to commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ but a time to dwell on his great teachings and preachings and to apply them faithfully to end human suffering everywhere. Above all, there is a pressing need to promote tolerance and understanding between different peoples, religions and cultures. There is also an urgent need to reintroduce and spirituality not only to inter-human relations but also to bilateral and multilateral relations between nations.

The climate of constructive tolerance that is enjoyed by all Jordanians, irrespective of their faith, is a hallmark of the Kingdom's stability and progress and a cardinal principle on which the country continues to develop on all fronts. This national and personal achievement is basically a tribute to the reign of His Majesty King Hussein and an example for other countries to emulate.

Accordingly, as we salute and congratulate all Christians this year on Christmas, we are duty-bound to remind everybody that the happy and joyous occasion is also an occasion for reflection and soul-searching, in a bid to apply the message of love and peace to worldly issues and disputes.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I daily bitterly criticised Western countries for merely issuing statements of condemnation against Israel's expulsion of more than 500 Palestinians. In a statement in the West, the paper said, "Israel's arbitrary action neither has the world community decided on a firm measure to force the Jewish state to repatriate the deportees, said the daily. Western leaders sitting comfortably in their plush-offices, warm and happy are merely issuing statements which can by no means ensure the return of the deportees, it said. The expelled Palestinians are out in the cold facing severe weather conditions and awaiting help from the international community and exposed to the Zionist bullets, said the daily. The paper said that the Western countries' silence about this matter is tantamount to condoning Israel's actions and clearly portrays the Western colonialist hypocrisy. Before winter came, Western leaders were expressing concern over the Kurdish population in northern Iraq fearing that they would suffer from the cold and hunger while, at the same time, threatening to launch another war on Iraq in defence of these Kurds, said the daily. It said that the Western countries illegally used Iraqi frozen assets to buy food for the Kurds, but are doing nothing to save the deportees or taking steps to stop such Israeli atrocities which are continuing day and night in the occupied Arab territories.

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i daily urged the Arab League to demand that Palestinians and Jordanian rights and properties lost in Kuwait be returned to them. The Arab League has been demanding that the Iraqis return what it says, hundreds of Kuwaiti nationals held hostage in Iraq, but what about the Jordanians and Palestinians still in the Kuwaiti jails, their rights, their savings and their other properties, asked Tareq Masarweh. The writer also urged the Foreign Ministry in Amman to make speedy moves to ensure the rights of the Palestinians and Jordanians in Kuwait and to demand that Kuwait release the remaining Jordanians and Palestinians still held hostage in jail, without trial. The writer said that the Jordanian government should raise the matter with the United Nations Organisations and expose the Kuwaiti rulers' atrocities. He said that if France, Britain and the United States are the protectors of the Kuwaiti regime, they should all be held responsible for the fate of the remaining Jordanians and Palestinians.

Following is the speech on "What's going on in the Middle East?" delivered at the end of November by Ali Ghandour, His Majesty King Hussein's advisor on civil aviation and tourism, at the University of Cincinnati, I.L.R. College of Evening and Continuing Education.

I am not surprised but indeed heartened to note that, while Americans are still in the throes of a severe and prolonged recession and therefore preoccupied with a domestic agenda, attention is focused on the Middle East. This is important because U.S. strategists take a long-term view of the future and of U.S. interests and security. Contrary to widely-held beliefs by the man-in-the-street in the Middle East, U.S. concerns are not necessarily incongruent with those of the Arab people. The mutuality of interests has to be recognised, demonstrated and confirmed beyond the shadow of any doubt in order to allay fear and mistrust — the underlying factors that have bedevilled U.S.-Arab relations over the span of four decades and seem to be waning now.

To my mind, the U.S. is on record as having demonstrated qualities of leadership from time to time in the conduct of foreign affairs and has the potential to lead provided it recognises its responsibilities.

In the aftermath of the Gulf war and in the wake of the disintegration of the Soviet Union, President George Bush spoke of a new world order. His pronouncement invited suspicion in those countries that are in close conflict with Israel. There was fear that the new world order envisaged would imply the further "Balkanisation" of the Arab region along the lines of the Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916. Little attention was paid to the origins of Mr. Bush's thinking.

At this juncture, it is worth recalling that on August 12, 1941, Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill subscribed to a joint declaration the Daily Herald in London two days later gave the enduring name: The Atlantic Charter. The goals of the document were — "the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live," "equal access to the trade and to the raw materials of the world," "improved labour standards, economic advancement and social security," relief from "the crushing burden of armaments," establishment of a community of nations.

These purposes and principles, said Arthur Schlesinger in The New York Times, today constitute the philosophical and juridical basis for President George Bush's new world order.

Yet George Bush's concept of a new world order would not have shown promise or even seen the light if it had not been for the end of the cold war.

The end of the cold war and the advent of the Gulf war in 1990 combined together, albeit for different reasons, to prepare hopefully the ground for an Arab-Israeli reconciliation and resolution of the Palestine question which all along was deemed to constitute and core of the, at one time, seemingly incessant conflict.

Prior to the Madrid peace conference, held in November last year, there were two serious peace initiatives since the Camp David accords of 1978 that led to the normalisation of relations between Egypt and Israel. One by President Ronald Reagan upon his taking up office and the other by the European Community, namely the Venice Declaration of 1980. Unfortunately, they came to nothing. Both the Arabs and the Israelis were intransigent. The Arabs held to maximalist demands and the Israelis to maximalist objectives. The Arabs demanded restoration of Arab rights to territory and the Israelis, under the Likud, envisioned a Greater Israel. Both thought that time was on their side. The Arabs were proved wrong. Israel, on the other hand, adopted procrastination as the best strategy. Israel's first prime minister, David Ben Gurion, noted in his diary a

remark by the Israeli diplomat Abba Eban: "An armistice is sufficient for us. If we chase after peace, the Arabs will demand of us a price — borders or refugees or both."

The Gulf war, it is to be noted, laid bare myths and illusions. Both Arabs and Israelis woke up to a new situation. Arab unity had become fragile, if not shattered and Israel's myopic sense of security, the citadel syndrome, exposed. A mutual realisation emerged that Arabs and Israelis are consigned to live together in peace or else they are condemned to a cataclysmic future. The majority of Arabs and Israelis are fed up of being fed rhetoric which invites scepticism and frustration. Both now demand a pragmatic approach to pressing problems in the various aspects of human activity and endeavour. For the first time in almost fifty years the forces of moderation on both sides are making their presence felt and could ultimately influence the course as well as the turn of events in the right direction.

The attainment of peace in the Middle East is not simply important for its own sake. It has worldwide ramifications. The Arab-Israeli conflict may seem remote to some countries in the world, but because of its political, economic and religious overtones it cannot be ignored. Two-thirds of the world oil reserves lie in the Arab Middle East, and there is of course worldwide interest in safeguarding the flow of oil at affordable prices. In the absence of harmony, radicalisation of the Arab states in pursuit of political objectives could turn the balance upside-down and bring untold upheaval in its wake. There is also the danger of stockpiling of lethal weapons, including nuclear capabilities, these constituting a great danger to international peace.

For these and other no less tangible reasons, the world leaders were drawn to Madrid to promote and support the cause of peace and the principle of shared destiny.

The Gulf war brought great tragedy in its wake all around. Yet, we cannot despair and a new beginning is being made. We seem to live today in a multipolar world in which doctrines of collective security and U.N. actions rule the day. The U.N. seems poised to live up to its potential, although doubt is being cast on its inaction to support and maintain the territorial integrity of the newly-emerged Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The fact remains that the Middle East is changing because it is an integral part of the world.

The Madrid peace conference could not have taken place without the Bush administration wanting to live up to its pledge to address the Palestinian problem. The Arabs responded, including of course the Palestinians, because it was seen as the last window of opportunity. Israel, despite the loud protestations of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, did not wish to be left in the cold and to become morally and politically isolated. There is no question that the withholding of the \$10-billion in loan guarantees, subsequently granted to the incoming government of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, must have influenced Israel's decision to come to the negotiating table.

The Madrid peace conference a year ago took off to a bumpy start, as anyone might have expected, but since then negotiations, particularly on the bilateral level, have assumed a tone of reasonableness. In the Israeli view, time is not of the essence. They hold on to Cardinal Richelieu's observation three centuries ago that the art of negotiation "must be a permanent activity and not merely a hurried operation." To the Arabs time is all important. The West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights have been under Israeli occupation since 1967. Well over a million Palestinians suffer the occupation which they find oppressive and humiliating and newly-enlightened Israelis find corrosive to the Jewish spirit. The occupation, without parallel in the recent annals of history, must end and the right of the Palesti-

nians to self-determination must be recognised and granted. Compromise is both fine and essential, but should not be at the expense of the vanquished. Otherwise, it will not withstand the test of time.

The Israelis think and hope that agreement can be reached piecemeal with the negotiating parties. This is not only wishful thinking but dangerous too and, at the end of the day, self-defeating and counterproductive. I could foresee piecemeal agreements being successfully negotiated, but acceptance of one agreement must be contingent upon acceptance of all the others and, in the final analysis, must enmesh in one whole. This is the path, the only path, to an honourable, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East.

It is difficult to predict the outcome of the peace talks. I do, however, suspect that it could be a reshuffle of the 1978 Camp David accord. The accord provides for Palestinian self-rule during a five-year transitional period, the establishment of an elected self-government authority in the West Bank and Gaza, the withdrawal at some point of the Israeli military government and of its civilian administration and the redeployment of the remaining Israeli forces into a specified security locations. The accord envisages the institution of measures for assuring internal and external security, such as the establishment of a strong local police force and joint Israel-Jordanian border patrols and control posts.

It stipulates that "no later than the third year after the beginning of the transitional period, negotiations will take place to determine the final status of the West Bank and Gaza and its relationship with its neighbours, and to conclude a peace treaty between Israel and Jordan by the end of the transitional period." The negotiations are to be conducted in recognition "of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and their just requirements" and "the adoption of all necessary measures to assure the security of Israel and its neighbours."

To my mind, the transitional period being envisaged in the present talks constitutes a crucial element, and if agreed to by the negotiating parties, could effectively lead to better understanding and admission of Palestinian rights by the Israelis.

The scene today, on both sides of the equation, is more encouraging as less "spoilers" are around and many have already been neutralised. "Outbidders" seem now to belong to a defunct era.

As the issue of Palestine is being tackled bravely and intelligently now, problems simmer in many parts of the Middle East. It is true that the Gulf war had accelerated the search for Mideast peace, but it has impacted the region in ways heretofore unknown.

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries now say publicly what they had previously whispered privately — preoccupation with their own security requirements, accentuated by fear and mistrust. They are forced to contend with the dangers from outside and from within. Palestine is no more the burning issue it once was, although it could potentially become a rallying banner for irreconcilables and Islamic fundamentalists inside. The pace of democratisation has been hastened, a fact to which the ruling autocracy somewhat reluctantly acquiesces. Within, the clamour for change, social and economic, persists. Forces representing the right and the left pull apart rather than together, thus creating conditions of potential instability.

As a result of the Gulf war there has been a noticeable shift in the political balance. The pendulum seems to have swung towards non-Arab countries, namely Israel, Iran and Turkey. Iran is the only country in the Middle East that, for military purposes, depends on itself. Israel faces no military match of any consequence. And Turkey is deemed by the West to be a strategic asset in the region.

On the other hand, the GCC collapsed and was replaced by a new defensive pact consisting of Egypt, Syria and Saudi Arabia — strange bedfellows at one time but no more!

The new Russia, the ex-Soviet Union, is no more a principal or dominant player in the region. I do, however, believe that if and when Russia puts its own house in order, it will have a role to play — albeit a limited one — because of its national interests and strong historic ties to some countries in the region.

GCC countries, with the help of Egypt and Saudi Arabia, might have thought that they have achieved Gulf security as an upshot of the Gulf war, but now realise that their individual security cannot be realised without a strong western participation. Iran and Yemen oppose any regional security order if they are not party to it. Yemen and Iran say that a regional security order does not mean a military arrangement but should entail political, economic and cultural cooperation.

The GCC refuses the proposal, though Saudi Arabia has lately improved its relations with Iran with a view to containing Iraq rather than inviting Iran into a regional security order.

It is worth noting that since the Gulf war more arms were sold or offered to the Gulf and Middle East countries, notwithstanding the western countries' commitment to stop arms deliveries. Western countries, it seems, crave to sell arms and Middle East countries crave to buy them, for their own peculiar reasons.

Kuwait remains a hot spot, the object of Iraqi ambitions that have not unequivocally been renounced. Kuwait, insofar as external security is concerned, is now resigned, of its own volition, to western hegemony. Consequently, it is not expected to play a role in international affairs. In pan-Arab affairs, because of exogenous circumstances, Kuwait's role will not extend beyond the GCC countries.

Kuwait is now preoccupied with domestic issues: agitation for power-sharing and demand for national reconciliation and unity. The newly-elected parliament is a manifestation of "managed" democracy at work.

However, Kuwait will remain in the spotlight because of its immense oil reserves and substantial market for foreign goods and services. Already rivalry between the U.S. and Japan can be discerned and the Japanese-owned Arabian Oil Company's concession, which will come up for renewal shortly, becomes a testing point. The Japanese already feel edgy and now favour a less than robust American presence in the area.

Iraq wallows in the defeat of the Gulf war and awaits direction. It gropes for solutions that it cannot find. The danger of the country being divided along ethnic and religious lines is a nightmare. The Kurdish and Shiite problems have come to the fore and compound an already complex situation. Extremists are fed on frustration and anger and create a force for further conflict. Division means divisiveness and is a cause of prolonged instability. People come and go, but the integrity of the country must be preserved. And I visualise that Iraq, under normal and natural circumstances, will have an important positive role to play, regionally and internationally.

Iran is the only and truly theocratic state in the Middle East and attempts to play a role commensurate with its character. Iran wishes to extend its influence and presence beyond its own domain, but international interests, which are now at loggerheads, will keep it in check. The Iranians are shrewd enough to realise their own limitations. They are now concerned with increasing oil production to 4-million barrels a day if they can get away with it. Iran needs all the revenues it can muster to rebuild its shattered economy and infrastructure.

Lebanon, the one-time beacon of freedom and democracy, lies in

ruins. At present it is captive to external forces and, under the circumstances, finds it difficult to seek its own salvation. The pluralistic society in Lebanon was governed by a sectarian formula: privileges and concessions were divided amongst the contending religious groups in accordance with the 1943 national covenant. Demographic change in favour of a historically downtrodden sector of the population led to the civil war and stymied the national covenant. It has since been replaced by the Taif accord which ultimately calls for the uprooting of the sectarian route and for following or imposing a secular system. A new parliament elected recently was supposed to address the problem at stake, but the nation is still politically split on the issue. The future of the country is tied down to a successful outcome of the Middle East peace talks now under way. We anticipate change in Lebanon, but in order to achieve meaningful reforms, all foreign military presence must be eliminated so that Lebanon can enjoy self-determination and finally become the arbiter in its own cause.

Syria has been swift in recognising the ramifications of the end of the cold war and has adjusted painlessly to the dictates and necessities of realpolitik. Of course, the occupation of the Golan Heights — a thorn in Syrian flesh

— presents embarrassment and challenge. There seems to be no overt challenge to the one-party rule, and Syria continues to develop along all-too-familiar lines. Egypt faces colossal problems: explosive population growth, unemployment and poverty beyond description. Egypt's cultural pre-eminence in the Arab World is widely recognised, but its political clout at the regional and international levels has been circumscribed. Egypt does not have the capabilities, nor can it afford, to back serious initiatives abroad. Of recent importance, Egypt serves as an interlocutor between the Arabs and Israelis.

The country is certainly in turmoil. Foreign policy and involvement is now an obsession. Economic stagnation and internal security are pressing domestic issues that challenge the extant fragile stability. Forces on opposite sides of the spectrum are at work, clashing violently along the way. Islamic fundamentalists clash with established authority, demanding that Islam be the solution to Egypt's ills. Through the available democratic process, they are reaching for the upper echelons of power in the professions. Frustration has given way to despair and their platform seems to appeal to a dispirited and dispossessed population. Massive western aid, which has not been forthcoming, can perhaps check the trend towards radicalism.

Saudi Arabia continues to be preoccupied with external security, judging by the continuous military build-up. On the home front, Saudi Arabia has not been immune from recent influences that have swept the Mideast nations. Doses of "managed" democracy are being dispensed. The fact remains that there is a struggle between the forces of conservatism, wanting to resist change, and the forces of liberalism, wanting to force change. The ruling oligarchy seems to be walking a tightrope.

As far as Jordan is concerned, it is a small country with scarce resources that managed, thanks to the leadership, vision and determination of His Majesty King Hussein, to build a fairly modern state. Financial aid and loan support from Arab oil producing countries and western governments, including the United States, was forthcoming because of Jordan's political role in the region that calls for moderation. Jordan is also seen as providing a level playing field for competing political and social forces from the extreme left to the extreme right to co-exist and to co-habitate in pursuit of the common good. Jordan is also viewed in a favourable light by the international community because of its unceasing efforts to help find a

peaceful resolution to the Israeli conflict. Seen in proper perspective, Jordan has carried the burden of the conflict. It was the only country that granted full citizenship to the Palestinian refugees who influx into the country. The Israeli wars had forced Palestinians into the East Bank of the Jordan River, a demographic imbalance has ensued.

This situation, coupled with Israeli call under the Taif agreement for the Jordan to provide a solution to the Palestinian problem, caused uneasiness in the Jordanian government. The situation was further aggravated by the influx into Jordan of 300,000 people who were expelled from Kuwait as a consequence of the Gulf war.

Today, Jordan is facing economic problems. Arab funds ceased and development suffered. Poverty and unemployment are rampant and need to be addressed seriously and in the pursuit of long-term stability.

Fortunately, Jordan was able to recognise the meaning of world order and moved to democratisation. Parliamentary elections were held in 1989 out of necessity.

I believe Jordan's timely move saved the country by averting radicalism and the attraction of western and Jap support.

Jordan has a pivotal role to play in Mideast politics and it well. To advance its position in the region, it agreed to provide the new umbrella for Palestinian participation in the peace process. Jordan, I believe, will continue to provide the umbrella for the arrangement: the federalist states arrangement.

There is always the tempt to emulate western-style democracy in the Mideast region as the aim is, it will not work. Superimposing western style democracy will not prevent the emergence of menacing forces, such as the fundamentalists. We know that modernisation was one of the factors destroying a coalition with Iran, because of the problems it brought about economic development, hand-in-hand to allow for emancipation and retention of national values at the same time.

In a nutshell, the Middle East is undergoing change. The new realisation that the boundaries are necessary, self-serving. This is visible in the skirmishes between Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, the Nile Valley and of the Levant have developed their own models of cooperation and integration. Arab peoples of the Middle East in their own compartmentalised areas are desirous of unity, often bitter and bicker along path of achieving it. The struggle between secular and sectarian forces goes on. Arab strength and could provide counter-balance to the rise of Islamic fundamentalism. It hoped that the advent of "managed" democracy, even in do will raise the threshold of a serious confrontation.

Peace in the Middle East is enough. Peace without progress and justice is meaningless. A meaning of peace is not simply co-exist but co-habitate and learn to live together in amity and harmony.

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Peace in the Middle East is enough. Peace without progress and justice is meaningless. A meaning of peace is not simply co-exist but co-habitate and learn to live together in amity and harmony.

The Middle East is, as it always been, a complex, coming and intriguing subject. The wisdom of hindsight, untainted by the current, certainly tells about it. With peace talks going on, I believe breakthrough has been achieved and a new beginning is in sight.

The nations of the Middle East now have the chance to leave behind a history of warfare behind and lead towards the light of a new age. Humanity can finally evolve to a higher order of living, one of peace and no war.

New world order and the problems of intervention

By Christopher Connell
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — George Bush dreamt of a new world order where law-abiding nations would defuse crises like the ethnic warfare that has convulsed the Balkans.

But in his final weeks in office, the president is finding it difficult to line up support even for enforcement of the U.N. no-fly zone over Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The fear: Strict enforcement could invite retaliation against 25,000 peacekeeping troops from various countries in the former Yugoslav republics.

There's a need for a "settle-

ment that does not disturb the humanitarian assistance that's so necessary for so many hundreds of thousands of people in Yugoslavia," said British Prime Minister John Major.

Strict U.N. enforcement of the no fly zone "presents very grave dangers...I have very grave concerns about it," former Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, now the U.N. special envoy for the Balkan crisis, has said.

Bosnia-Herzegovina's foreign minister, Haris Silajdzik, on Friday urged lifting the weapons embargo and active enforcement of the months-old U.N. declaration against Serbian planes overflying Bosnia.

Mr. Bush is looking to the

U.N. Security Council to adopt a new resolution this week that will allow the United States and European allies to stop the Serb military flights.

But that is a stopgap measure at best. No one expects it to end the bloodletting in the Balkans.

Mr. Bush, after a White House meeting Friday with Mr. Major, said: "We reaffirmed our commitment to the unhampered flow of humanitarian aid and to ending the violence there through a sound political solution."

Earlier, when Secretary of State Lawrence S. Eagleburger pressed for a strong statement of support from NATO for flexing military might in the skies over Bosnia, Britain insisted on water-

ing down the alliance's language.

Mr. Vance has a reputation for caution. He resigned as Jimmy Carter's secretary of state in April 1980 over a disagreement about a failed military rescue mission to free the American hostages in Tehran.

Mr. Eagleburger, a caretaker secretary of state and onetime U.S. ambassador to Belgrade, has called for war crimes tribunals for Serbia's leaders, starting with its president, Slobodan Milosevic.

It was uncertain, however, whether that would help or hurt Mr. Milosevic, an ex-communist and hard line nationalist, in his election battle Sunday against

pro-western rival Milan Panic, a Serb-born American millionaire.

While Mr. Bush has shown a willingness to police the skies over Bosnia, he has not been ready to dispatch American troops into a civil war in rugged countryside against factions armed far more heavily than Somalia's warlords.

And although Operation Restore Hope has gone smoothly in East Africa, without the loss of a single American life, Mr. Bush is running out of time to tackle any more ambitious operation in former Yugoslavia.

"It's very unlikely in my estimation that this government would participate actively in two

interventions at the same time," said Charles F. Doran, a professor of international relations at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies. "That is simply not very manageable situation."

The Balkans dispute "is dead in the European sphere," Doran said. If the Europeans are unwilling to tackle the job, it would be very unwise to do it.

And if Mr. Bush balked at disarming the gangs and thugs in Somalia, how could he expect to undertake that much tougher task in the Balkans?

But the instability in former Yugoslavia threatens to spread to other parts of Europe.

مَكَدَنِي الْأَمَل

Weekender

Dear Santa, I would like world peace...

By Lars Foyen
Reuter

COPENHAGEN — A glass jar filled with discarded letters sent in by children all over the world is part of the universal appeal of Santa Claus. The six-metre (20-foot) structure stands outside the workshop in Greenland's capital Nuuk. The neighbouring Santa Claus Post Office, officially closed during a heatwave last week, is part of a \$2 million theme park under construction and it expects up to 150,000 letters a year. Children send their letters to show they have the sucking habit and the special generosity of Christmas.

Four-year-old Jamie Lewsey from Turnford, England, points out in his letter that he has been a brave boy as well as a good one: "Dear Santa Claus,

"My mummy says I have been a good boy all year, especially since I was so brave when I had my tonsils removed in April. "For Christmas, I would like a yellow bicycle with sidewheels or a billiard set. Aunt Anne says she has already talked to you about the game.

"P.S. I will leave a glass of milk and a portion of pate as well as some apples and raisins out for you on Christmas eve."

A prisoner in a Danish penitentiary writes that he has preserved his children's

belief in Father Christmas and asks Santa to send him a rope ladder and file.

Christmas wishes range from the worldly, such as a remote controlled model red Ferrari 305 GT sports car to a speaking parrot or a week in Disneyland, marketing manager Frank Busk Soerensen told Reuters by telephone.

"But there are also children who want their parents to stop quarrelling. Kids in countries at war often wish for peace in the world," he said.

Japanese children wonder if Santa likes his job and what kind of vegetables he grows in his garden.

Although named Greenland by the Vikings, who discovered it when the global climate was warmer, the world's largest island is most-

ly icebound, and being the "real home" of Santa is one of its few natural assets.

The Christmas theme park, spread over 1,000 square metres at a disused dockyard, features the post office, a Rudolph the red-nosed reindeer's restaurant and a market selling yuletide gifts and Eskimo handicrafts.

By Christmas next year, Santa's workshop will be completed and the centre will also offer exhibitions on Greenland's nature and wildlife, and sleigh rides with real reindeer.

Greenland, suffering from economic recession and relying on an annual \$360 million subsidy from its former Danish colonial rulers, hopes Santa will generate an annual \$20 million, partly through attracting U.S. and Japanese

visitors.

The theme park concept was inspired by Walt Disney's cartoon films, which clearly state that the white-bearded figure lives at the North Pole, Greenland, Busk said.

The post office, to which children can write under the address Santa Claus, c/o the North Pole, Greenland, is the centre's frontline enterprise.

"From a business point of view, it is an ideal way of generating publicity and building up a mailing list of people who will later be offered magazines, videos, toys and other products based on the Santa workshop concept," Busk said.

As Christmas approaches, the post office is handling up to 5,000 letters each day, with the staff feeding addresses

into a computer which responds by sticking labels on packages containing Santa's reply and a token gift.

"All the letters are opened and read, although perhaps not in full detail. This is a question of morality. A child writing to Santa should be heard and receive an answer," Busk said.

This year, there are standard replies in English, Danish and the Eskimo language.

The centre is working with psychologists in a project intended to expand the range of messages so that the needs of children with domestic or other problems can be met. What is a token gift?

"Come on, it would ruin the excitement if I told you," Busk said.

BOOK REVIEWS

Fulfilling manifest deficiency

Brief History of the Central Asian Republics and Azerbaijan

By Dr. Gali Oda Tealakh
Royal Scientific Society Press, Amman

A recent publication by Dr. Gali O. Tealakh dealing with the political history of Central Asia and Azerbaijan entitled Brief History of the Republics of Central Asia and Azerbaijan was published recently by the Royal Scientific Society. The study covers the history of five Central Asian Republics: Kazakhstan, Kirghizistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan. Yet the author included in the same volume Azerbaijan, which is a Caucasian republic but as long as it is affiliated to Central Asian nations ethnically and linguistically the author considered it proper to include these Turkic nations in one study.

The book comes at a suitable time to fulfill a manifest deficiency in this field especially after the independence of these states. The Central Asian nations and Azerbaijan are looking towards fitting into their natural environment, i.e. the Middle East, which includes Turkey, the Arab World, and Iran. Dealing with newly independent nations requires deep knowledge of their history in general and their attitude towards their ex-metropolitan country (Russia). These countries are members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) which undoubtedly entails certain obligations, regionally and internationally, and in turn would be reflected on their position regionally and their international relations in general.

Dr. Tealakh in his book dealt with the history of those nations in the critical period which put them under the tsarist control in the last century. This period is rather obscure to the regular reader so far as related information is not available only in languages of limited spread to the Eastern reader. A very unique experience in the life of these Asian nations began after the fall of tsarism in 1917, and the emergence of communism in Russia. Tsarism endeavoured to spread Christianity by encouraging missionary work. The two religions have a rich tradition in dealing with each other, but communism came of a completely different nature. Communism did not accept any other ideology and allowed no challenge. Communism suppressed both religions but action against Islam was remarkably brutal. The destiny of these Muslim nations as members of the Soviet Union has been studied in sufficient detail in this volume. Moreover, the author at the end of each chapter highlights the situation in these republics on the eve and after the collapse of the USSR.

A martyr in isolation

Nuclear Ambiguity: The Vanunu Affair

By Yoel Cohen
Sinclair-Stevenson, London 1992. £10.99

Mordechai Vanunu's continued martyrdom in isolation in an Israeli prison — on the spurious grounds that he might threaten Israel's security were he to mix with other prisoners — is, perhaps, only a small addition to that country's shameful record of human rights abuses.

According to Yoel Cohen, in this comprehensive and effective study of the "Vanunu affair," Mordechai Vanunu's plight is rendered even more poignant by the fact that his sacrifice has served little purpose. Israel's nuclear capacity was already widely suspected and, even though Mordechai Vanunu's revelations demonstrated that it was far greater than originally thought, their real effect was to render the knowledge of its existence an even more effective deterrent against Arab threats to Israel's security.

Although Mr. Cohen, as an Israeli citizen, had to submit his book for approval by censor, he has provided an excellent account, not only of what Mordechai Vanunu actually did, but of the political and social background to the affair. The Vanunu family, Vanunu's own political development, the incompetence of the Dimona security staff and the relentless determination of the Israeli authorities to avenge themselves on Vanunu once the revelations had surfaced are all described in detail.

No one emerges well from this account, except, perhaps, Mordechai Vanunu himself, for, although Mr. Cohen argues that his sacrifice was of little political use, his honesty and integrity are undeniable. The other actors fail to live up to such a standard, from the London Sunday Times, which is castigated for an almost frivolous disregard for Vanunu's personal safety, to the British and Italian authorities who effectively turned blind eyes to Mossad activities on their territories while Vanunu was kidnapped and returned to Israel.

Mr. Cohen also lays a few ghosts; Robert Maxwell and the Daily Mirror were not the channel through which the Israeli authorities learned of Vanunu's intentions, for example. Seymour Hersh was misled in his belief that this was so (as recounted in the Sampson Option). Vanunu was ill-served by his lawyers in Israel and by the Israeli legal system. Indeed, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the sentence he received reflected considerable official vindictiveness rather than a measure of the damage he had caused, if any, to Israeli security. Mossad, too, was quite prepared to appropriate the identities of living persons to camouflage its operatives abroad. In any case, the punishment inflicted on Mordechai Vanunu was quite out of proportion in view of the fact that, in any Western country, what he had done would have been considered to be part of the inevitable leakage of information associated with any free society. It is a pity that the Israeli government cannot learn that lesson and even now treat Vanunu's case with the consideration it deserves — Middle East International.

George Joffe

Dutch Santa faces challenge from rival

By Andrew Kelly
Reuter

STERDAM — As Santa Claus gets ready to do his Christmas rounds, the Dutch have long since celebrated their annual visit to their

in the Netherlands he is the feast of St Nicholas, which Dutch set took to America.

the Anglo-Saxon version of Santa has been gaining popularity here and some would even oust Sinterklaas as he is known in

many Dutch people, the American Santa is the imitation of the authentic Sinterklaas. They see him as an impostor, under-estimated local customs and tradition.

else is quite as the Sinterklaas Festival could lose it if

we're not careful," says Amsterdam writer Nicolaas Matsier.

Mr. Matsier and his family celebrate Sinterklaas the traditional way, but he fears they belong to a dwindling minority.

"Sinterklaas is all about jokes, surprises and funny poems, but some people are too lazy to make the effort these days."

Although they share common origins and a preference for red robes and white beards, the two Santas have distinct identities.

The Anglo-Saxon Santa is a secular figure but Sinterklaas is a Catholic bishop complete with mitre and staff.

Santa Claus lives at the North Pole while Sinterklaas resides in Spain, somewhat closer, to the home of the historical St Nicholas who was Bishop of Myra in Turkey.

Santa delivers his presents

for Christmas Day on Dec. 25 in a sleigh drawn by a team of reindeer, but Sinterklaas always arrives by steamboat and travels around the Netherlands on a white horse.

Dutch schoolchildren rehearse special songs in the weeks before Sinterklaas arrives and the excitement gradually builds up until Dec. 5.

Youngsters await his arrival with a mixture of eagerness and dread, for Sinterklaas keeps a big book in which he records all of their good and bad deeds.

Good children are rewarded with presents, but naughty ones are bundled into a sack and taken off to Spain.

Since the 19th century, Sinterklaas has been helped by a mischievous, dark-skinned servant known as Zwarte Piet (Black Peter).

Concern about racism made Zwarte Piet a con-

troversial figure in the 1970s and 1980s, but the tradition has survived because of his great popularity across all ethnic groups.

As children grow up they join in an elaborate family celebration involving an exchange of presents and the recital of poems in which members of the family poke fun at each other.

Increasingly, however, Christmas is edging out Sinterklaas as the most important family holiday in the Netherlands.

Anton Zijnderveld, professor of sociology at Rotterdam University, says this is largely due to the decline of the traditional family unit.

"The Christmas celebration fits in much better with a more individualised society," he says.

Staunch supporters of the Dutch tradition accuse department stores and the media of promoting an excess

of consumption at the expense of the innocent charms of Sinterklaas.

Some fear Sinterklaas and Zwarte Piet are doomed to disappear unless urgent action is taken.

Mr. Matsier recommends setting up a special foundation to train teachers and parents in Sinterklaas cus-

oms and appointing a professor of Sinterklaas studies at one of the universities.

But Prof. Zijnderveld is confident that Sinterklaas will survive the battle of the Santas.

"I don't think that Anglo-Saxon fatty will gain a firm footing in the Netherlands," he says.

Our Joulupukki is the real Santa, Finns say

By Fredrik Dahl
Reuter

ROVANIEMI, Finland — Finland is stepping up its drive to promote its own Santa Claus — or "Joulupukki" as he is known locally.

A new firm called Santa Claus Finland International OY (SCFI) has been set up to "promote and market the only and original Santa Claus in Finland and international-

ly." As part of the campaign, the Finnish Santa has this winter toured parts of the Far East — believed to be a market with huge potential.

"We plan to commercialise certain parts of the Santa World," said Kai Wallin, president of SCFI. But, he added: "Not Santa Claus himself. He is above business, we have to keep Santa's image clean."

SCFI officials deny there is fierce rivalry between "Joulupukki" and other Father Christmases.

Greenland, Denmark's Arctic province, has this year launched a Santa Post Office as part of a new Santa Centre.

"We don't say that the Danish or Swedish Santa Claus are fake," said Mr. Wallin, stressing there was room for everybody.

The aim of SCFI, privately owned but authorised by the Finnish government, is to develop the "Santa World."

It plans to publish books about Santa, establish a Santa Claus Institute and help to set up Santa Claus villages around the world. One is already under construction in Japan.

It has also opened a business office for Santa in downtown Helsinki, the Finnish capital, in addition to his headquarters at the Santa Claus village outside the city of Rovaniemi by the Arctic Circle.

In Finland, the white-bearded old man in a red cloak who brings children Christmas presents on his reindeer-drawn sled is seen as being something of a national symbol and treasure.

The Finns claim he lives in Korvatunturi, literally "Ear Mountain", in the eastern part of the Finnish Lapland. Santa Claus helps bring much-needed tourist cash to

the sparsely populated northern parts of Finland, hit hard by the country's deep recession.

About 400,000 tourists visit the Santa Claus Village each year, some in specially chartered flights.

The Joulupukki Paapostikonttori (Santa Claus' Main Post Office) will this year receive roughly as many letters — from Finland to the Fiji Islands.

Up here, even a local soccer team is named after Father Christmas — FC Santa Claus Rovaniemi.

"He is an important PR man for the tourism here," said Marja Selin, a spokeswoman for the Santa Claus Village.

The appeal of the Finnish Santa seems to have declined in recent years, causing concern at the country's Foreign Ministry.

The number of letters has fallen from a high of 800,000 a year a few years ago to less than half that last year.

It has also been hard to find the money to expand the Santa Claus Village, originally built for local artists and artisans in the 1950s.

Today, besides meeting Santa Claus, visitors can sign up for Lapland safaris.

"It would be ideal to build something for Santa here, an old house with an open fire...but a Disneyland will never be built here in Lapland," said Ms. Selin.

Working under the slogan "original Santa Claus Finland," SCFI and the Finnish Post Office this year introduced an electronic mail system and other enhanced letter services.

Soon, every sender of a letter will be guaranteed a reply.

"If people receive letters from Santa Claus they will know he is from Finland," said Kati Nivala at the Santa Claus' Main Post Office.

The letters come from all parts of the world and from people of all ages.

A 31-year-old Japanese doctor asked if Santa could give him a blonde, Finnish wife, while a married couple wondered if Santa Claus could help them get children.

Most, of course, are from children telling Santa Claus what they want for Christmas.

New



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A major event from the VICHY Laboratories: Temporalia, global anti-time cream.
Corrects the past: Rich in active repairing ingredients, Temporalia combats the signs of time (wrinkles are reduced).
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Every day, the skin is at its peak of vitality and youthfulness.
* If the outer layers of the epidermis.

VICHY
LABORATOIRES



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What's in a megahertz?

By Jean-Claude Elias

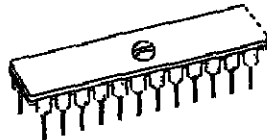
Have you ever wondered how come some powerful cars can't go as fast as less powerful ones or accelerate like them? It's all in the right understanding of the word "powerful." While the scientific definition of the term leaves no room for misunderstanding, its meaning in practical life is often distorted.

Power, in physics, is the capability to do a given work in a given time. A big car could be slower than a smaller one, for instance, simply because it is much heavier. Its engine has to move the passengers and its own weight, which precisely requires a lot of power. What therefore defines a car's speed or acceleration is the ratio of its power over its weight.

A Personal Computer (PC), like a car, is just another machine. PC users know that the current classification of machines in the market is made according to increases in the PC's power rating: 286, 386 and 486. This doesn't mean that the 386 will always perform faster than a 286. It all depends on the programme (software) one is using. Let's take an example: You want to run a spreadsheet programme in order to enter a list of numbers and perform some simple calculations on them. A 286 PC with Lotus 123 programme (regular version 2.3 for DOS), will probably finish the job faster than a 386 with Excel programme (version 4.0 for Windows). Why is that? Does it mean that Lotus is "better" than Excel?

The answer is because Excel 4.0 for Windows is a very powerful but large programme. It needs more processing power and memory just to run. It also offers plenty of possibilities and features that Lotus 123 version 2.3 doesn't have. The question is: Does one always need all these features? And does one have to keep buying more powerful

chip talk



PCs just to cope with larger and heavier programmes, even if their awesome power is not necessary, especially if the actual speed at which work used to be done on slower PCs but with simpler programmes, was higher?

What has been said for spreadsheet programmes is also true for word processing software. Writing a couple of lines to your friend might be done more easily and quickly with a very simple programme like WriteNow or an "editor" (supplied free-of-charge with your operating system) than with the fantastic, but huge, Microsoft Word 2.0 for Windows.

The software is to your PC what the weight is to your car. It's an overhead you have to take into consideration. More critical than the choice of the computer itself is the choice of the programmes you would use. Getting the right ones — not oversized, not undersized — can drastically improve your efficiency. With less things to learn, it can make your life easier and make you love your PC more. You would save a lot of disk space as well. Would you get a Cadillac just to go to the nearby bookshop and get your newspaper? Well, if you just love Cadillacs...

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

By Mohammad A. Shuqair

BITING, BUT CLEVER DEFINITIONS

BIGAMIST: A man who marries a beautiful girl and a good cook.

CANDIDATE: A person who gets money from the rich and votes from the poor to protect them from each other.

ASTRONAUT: A cloud hopper.

DEATH: — A sure cure for insomnia.
— A fate worse than life.
— A leap in the dark.
— A breath-taking experience.

AMAZING FACTS

- * About 190 different species of oyster are known to science.
- * Dry ice does not melt in the ordinary sense of the term but goes directly from a solid to a vapour.
- * It was Aristotle who theorised that without a medium of propagation, man would not hear sound.
- * In 1961 the name of the city Stalingrad was changed to Volgograd.
- * No animal or bird bleeds well if it is killed in an excited or over-heated condition.

LET'S CHAT IN ARABIC

QUESTIONS

- Who? **Mann**
- Who are you?/Who is she? **Mann anta?/Mann heya?**
- What? **Ma? Maza?**
- What are they doing? **Maza yaf'aloona?**
- What's your address? **Ma howa onwanak?**
- What's the matter? **Eih eili jara? Maza hadath?**
- Where? **Ayna?**
- Where is your father's shop? **Ayna dokkanet waldak?**
- Where's the telephone kiosk? **Ayna (Fain) Koshk Al Talafone?**
- When? **Mata?**
- When can I see you? **Mata (Enta) ashoofak?**
- Why? **Limaza? (Leish)?**
- Why are you angry? **Leish enta gadban?**
- How? **Kaifa (Keef)?**
- How are you? **Keef halak?**
- How could you come here? **Keef idkirt tiji hoan?**
- Which? **Ayy?**
- Which watch do you prefer? **Ayy sa'a tofaddil?**
- Which road leads to Irbid? **Ayy tareeq yewaddi le'Irbid?**
- Which book do you want? **Ayy kitab ayez?**
- How many? **Kam?**
- How many people are there in your family? **Kam shakhs fee eiliktom/ossritkom?**

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

- I. Are you good at spelling?
Please try your luck!
- Correct the mis-spelt words:

 1. SACRELIGIOUS
 2. APPROPRIATE
 3. SUPERCED
 4. GUAGE
 5. DISSIPATE
 6. RECOMENDATION
 7. OCURRENCE
 8. ECSTASY
 9. DESICATED
 10. BATALLION

- II. Say 'Yes' Or 'No':

 1. Is a bolero a bull-fighter?
 2. Is a pinnacle a boat?
 3. Are pipkins small apples?
 4. Are mendacious people liars?
 5. Were Salamanders once believed to be able to live in fire?

See Solutions on page D

Pocket full of dreams

By E. Yaghi

Not very long ago, middle-aged Waleed wore a suit and tie and walked with confidence and intelligence. He carried in his pocket a handful of dreams etched on a few pieces of paper which he would wave at passersby and shout, "I'm going to liberate Palestine! Listen to me, it's all written down here on these pages!"

But somewhere along the way, he became psychologically unable to cope realistically and effectively with the ordinary challenges of his life. Now Waleed violates the social norms concerning reality and his behaviour ranges from irrational depression to delusions to hallucinations. His thoughts and speech are fractured, his behaviour unpredictable, incomprehensible and sometimes frightening to others, making mutual social interaction difficult or even impossible. Most mental disorders have no known physical cause or definitive symptoms.

In the past, many societies attributed mental disorder to supernatural influences. The victims were believed to be possessed by evil spirits that had entered the body. Some, though not all mental disorder is a learned form of behaviour, unconsciously adopted by some people as a means of dealing with or avoiding personal pressures that threaten to overwhelm them. Some people "crack" under stress — whether it is derived from society itself or from the victim's own family.

Such a person is Waleed. No one knows why or how he "cracked" but now his clothes are worn and dirty. He is unkempt and there is a wild look in his eyes that knows little reason. Often in the cold of winter, he sits on the icy cement sidewalk with scraps of litter hoarded in his pockets like some enviable treasure. On their way to school, children stop and glare at him and begin to chant, "Oh, look at the crazy man! Isn't he funny?"

Once in a while, Waleed bothers to answer them, but more often than not, he dwells in his own world of illusions where reality is in a land and time of his past. And some nights, under the light of the pale blue moon which is

suspended within the dome of the black fur Waleed trudges about gathering old cartons, scattered paper and drags a train of rubbish down to an abandoned shack where he whistles in the cold and indifferent night air as he piles his own into a pyre of long lost dreams.

"Ah," he can be heard saying, "tonight I'll fire to top all fires!"

And as his pyre burns, it throws patches of blotches of light on passing bewildered shadows, befuddled man lies down close to the street, triumphantly at his accomplishment. Following physical and mental exhaustion, he waits until he lies in ashes and then drags himself off to sleep deserted alleyway. If he is spotted, he is often a shop owners or apartment dwellers in words like, "you! What are you doing here? Go away! Don't you home? What's the matter with you, are you a

Whereupon, he heaves himself away with much though the illness of his mind has affected the core, his body too and drags himself off to a more secluded to wear away his fatigue. On sunny days he can gather papers in the local park and burning them off the cobblestone passage-ways. Small children laughing at him and his efforts and he, the man, has escaped from reality, ignores them, bent on yet another fire. Once more, the funeral pyre is a man who a few years ago clutched papers of his hand and asserted: "Listen to me, I'm going to occupied territories!"

But instead of freeing his Palestine and in implementing his plan according to the papers in his hand, he now burns scraps of old litter which once pocket full of dreams into fumes of hopeless is doubtful if Waleed receives any sort of treatment or if he is even curable; but for the lives in a world of his own, without sympathy or standing, quite remote from our realm of reality, in a zone of illusions and delusions.

Quiz

Every Wednesday, Jordanians and foreigners residing in the country converge on the Intercontinental Hotel for an evening of entertainment. Over a drink at the hotel's bar, the quiz night guests compete for a first prize of a JD25 voucher for drinks and food.

So if you are versed in Arabic culture, Middle Eastern politics and world affairs, you think you stand a very good chance of winning the prize and boosting your well-rounded education. Not.

The history of Arabia, the details of the cold war and the intricacies of the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina would not help you much in winning the quiz night. In fact, nothing short of deep knowledge of American culture, names of American streets and yes, names of personalities' pets will put you at the forefront of competitors.

Ayman Al Safar

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

Thursday, Dec. 24

1789 — Britain and Russia sign alliance against France.

1800 — Plot is uncovered in Paris to assassinate Napoleon Bonaparte.

1942 — French administrator of North Africa, Admiral Jean Darlan, is assassinated in Algiers.

1951 — Libya becomes independent federation under King Idris I.

1984 — Iraq cancels all flights to and from Lebanon because of what it calls "inadequate security" at Beirut International Airport.

1988 — Soviet Union opens talks with exiled King of Afghanistan in Rome about new peace plan for his war torn country.

1989 — General Manuel Antonio Noriega takes refuge in the Vatican diplomatic mission in Panama City and resistance from remaining loyalist troops collapses.

1990 — Iraq recalls its ambassadors to U.S., U.N. and West European nations for urgent consultations as Jan. 15 deadline for withdrawal from Kuwait approaches.

1991 — Mikhail Gorbachev gives Soviet nuclear codes to his former rival Boris Yeltsin.

Friday, Dec. 25

1818 — Christmas carol Silent Night is sung for first time in Austrian village of Oberndorf.

1897 — Italy cedes Kassala to Egypt.

1936 — Mutinous war lords in China release Chiang Kai Shek after kidnapping him and holding him for 12 days.

1941 — Hong Kong surrenders to Japanese in World War II.

1959 — Soviet Union agrees to give financial and technical aid to Syria.

1969 — Israeli crews sail six gunboats, built for Israel but withheld by French government, out of Cherbourg harbour en route to Haifa.

1975 — Soviet Union sets off powerful underground nuclear explosion at testing site in Siberia.

1977 — Israel's Prime Minister Menachem Begin meets Egypt's President Anwar Sadat at Ismailia, Egypt, for peace talks.

1986 — Iraqi Airways jetliner with 107 people aboard explodes and burns as it attempts forced landing at remote desert airstrip in Saudi Arabia, killing 62 people.

1989 — Deposed Communist leader Nicolae Ceausescu and wife Elena are executed in Romania.

1990 — Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev wins sweeping new powers from Congress of People's Deputies despite Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze's warnings that the country is moving toward dictatorship.

1991 — Mikhail Gorbachev formally resigns as president of the Soviet Union.

1991 — U.S. declares Manila an open city in the Philippines in World War II.

1971 — Sixteen U.S. veterans of Vietnam War seize Statue of Liberty in New York Harbour to dramatise their anti-war stand.

1977 — Israel's Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Egypt's President Anwar Sadat conclude meeting at Ismailia, Egypt, without agreeing on Middle East issues.

1989 — Forces loyal to Communist government begin surrendering as videotape aired on Romanian television shows bloody bodies of President Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife.

1991 — Algeria holds first multi-party parliamentary elections since its independence from France in 1962.

1991 — Joseph Stalin's faction wins at All Union Congress in Soviet Union, and

Leon Trotsky is expelled from Communist Party.

1949 — The Netherlands' Queen Juliana signs document granting Indonesia sovereignty after more than three centuries of Dutch rule.

1964 — Congo government charges that officers from Algeria and United Arab Republic are leading Congolese rebels on Congo's northeastern border.

1969 — Libya, Sudan and United Arab Republic announce political, economic and military agreement in Tripoli.

1972 — Australia halts military aid to South Vietnam, ending its involvement in Vietnam War.

1975 — China releases Soviet helicopter that flew into Chinese territory.

1976 — At least 20 people die in fight between two groups of blacks in Cape Town, South Africa.

1990 — After being recalled days earlier, Iraq's ambassadors return to their posts calling for "serious and constructive dialogue" on the Gulf crisis.

1991 — Defence ministers of Commonwealth of Independent States agree on common military policy.

1991 — Defences of independent states agree on common military policy.

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1987 — Dozens of

nian teens appear military courts in West Bank charged in West Bank Strip.

1989 — Earth measuring 5.5 on the Scale kills at least in southeastern Au

1991 — Croatian Franjo Tudjman capture all territory Serb-led forces in via's civil war.

1991 — Defences of independent states agree on common military policy.

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Saadeddine Wahba — policeman turned playwright

By Katia Sabet

CAIRO — His name is so closely linked with the Cairo Film Festival, which he has headed for three years now, that it is easy to forget that this 68-year-old gentleman is probably Egypt's greatest living playwright. In a career spanning four decades, Saadeddine Wahba, better known as Saad Wahba, has worn many hats. He has been a short story writer, a journalist and has edited two literary magazines. He has been a leading trade union official, championing the rights of movie people. He has even held political posts. In the 1970s he spent five years as under-secretary at the Ministry of Culture.

But it is for his stagecraft that Saad Wahba will best be remembered. The author of 15 full-length and several more one-act plays, Wahba is one of Egypt's most prolific and talented playwrights. His best known works — *Kafir El Badi* (The Watermelon Village), *El Sebena* (The Goods Wagon), *Kobri El Namous* (Mosquito Bridge) and his own favourite, *El Mahrusa* (The Protegee) are milestones in the history of modern Arab theatre. But they are also plays known and loved by the man in the street for their finely drawn characters, many of whom have become household names.

In spite of his popularity, Saad Wahba has turned his back on writing. For now all his energies are directed towards making a success of the Cairo Film Festival, a two-week long jamboree of international movies held each December in the Egyptian capital, and which occupies Saad Wahba all year round. Since taking over as director in 1989, Saad Wahba has through himself heart and soul into attracting ever better films and juries. This year's festival, which opened on

Nov. 30 and ran through Dec. 13, showed movies from 20 different nations, opening with Robert Altman's *The Player*, starring Greta Scacchi and Tim Robbins. The festival paid homage to three great figures from the world of stage and screen — Egyptian writer Yehia Haggi, singer Leila Mourad and French director Jacques Deray, best known for his gangster movie *Borsalino*, which starred Alain Delon and Jean Paul Belmondo.

Saad Wahba is not an easy man to get to know. His public image is of a surly, secretive person, little given to long discourses and with a loathing for exhibitionism. His plays do little to help his public understand the man who penned them. The characters are so varied it is hard to recognise their author in any one of them. Is he the chauffeur in *Sekker El Salama* (The Safe Path) or the young policeman in *El Sebena* (The Goods Wagon)? Or is he one of the old peasants in one of his other plays, or one of the unforgettable female characters, who frequently have more courage and brains than any male character?

The playwright answers such questions with a wry smile, a smile which immediately belies the public image of a man with a scant sense of humour. In fact, Saad Wahba is full of surprises, and most of them are pleasant ones. Over a cup of tea at his home he reveals something of Saad Wahba the man. He talks of the things he treasures — the remarkable view from his balcony of the Ghizeh Pyramids, of the citadel and of the two forks of the Nile around Zamalek, memories of his many travels, the fact that great names from the movie world have this year agreed to sit on the jury of his festival. Saad Wahba's satisfactions are simple ones and

his modesty is striking. He is far more interested in talking about his origins in the tumultuous years of pre-World War II Egypt than he is about the prestigious state honour conferred on him in 1987 in recognition of his contribution to the arts.

As a young boy, Saad Wahba grew up in the Delta area, continually moving house as his father, who managed estates belonging to the wealthy Prince Omar Toussein, was given a new posting. Prince Omar, a cousin of King Fouad, was one of the richest members of the Egyptian royal family and treated his managers well. As a result, the young Saad had a comfortable childhood.

The eldest of four brothers, Saad was sent to boarding school at Damanhour in the southern Delta region, as there were no good schools in the area close to where his parents were living. On his forays into Damanhour itself, a town with a rich cultural life, Saad discovered the pleasures of poetry readings, classical Arab music and the theatre.

In 1941, Saad's father was transferred to Alexandria. It was a time when most other people were fleeing the city to escape the bombings and the imminent arrival of German troops. Here, in the half-empty streets, young Saad passed his adolescence, discovering the cinema thanks to a film called *The Razor's Edge*, and love in the form of a young girl he met each day on his way to school. "That film prompted me to learn English, so I could read the novel by Somerset Maugham on which it was based," he recalls. "And the young girl inspired my earliest attempts at writing poetry," he adds smiling.

Constantly under arrest

But at that time the young



At 68, Saadeddine Wahba is throwing all his energy into the Cairo Film Festival, but is best known as one of Egypt's most prolific and talented playwrights

Saad's most consuming interest was politics. In those turbulent days of party struggle, nationalism and religious extremism, Egyptian students were among the most politically active members of society. Hardly a month went by without some demonstration being organised. And Saad, who had begun to acquire a reputation as an agent provocateur, found himself constantly under arrest. As the son of a high-ranking member of staff of Prince Omar, Saad was always released before long. But it was an officer at the police station where the young students were regularly taken who finally suggested to his father that he consider enrolling his son at the Police Academy.

"If he goes in the other direction," the police officer said, "he will spend most of

his student days behind bars. It's far better that he should be on the side of those who are doing the arresting."

For Saad, who had already planned to enrol in the journalism department of Egypt's American University, it was a bitter blow. But he obeyed his father, promising himself he would carry on with the studies of his choice as soon as he was free. Saad survived the academy — though even in this closed and rarified atmosphere he managed to get himself arrested for organising a strike — and remained in the police force for six years, coming out in 1956 with the rank of major. At one stage he was appointed lieutenant in charge of keeping order in the town of Menouf. It was an experience that was to mark both the man and the playwright deep-

ly. A recurrent theme in his work is the opposition between the government and the people, portrayed in his plays as characters who are resigned to their poverty and to the injustice meted out to them.

"It was a dirty period," he says now. "It was the time of elections after the assassination of (murdered Prime Minister) Nokrachi Pacha and that of (religious extremist) Sheikh El Banna. The palace, which wanted to maintain a balance between the parties and above all wanted to control the composition and the colour of the future government, sent out to every police station in every village clear and precise instructions on who was to win and who was to lose the elections. The electoral campaign produced some bloody fights, and it wasn't unusual for people to be killed."

The Muslim Brotherhood, an Islamic fundamentalist movement launched by Sheikh Al Banna in the 1920s, had reared its head again, issuing a decree of popular vengeance against all "hat-wearers", a term used to denote foreigners. On Dec. 8, 1948, Prime Minister Nokrachi Pacha outlawed the organisation. Twenty days later, he was assassinated. Muslim Brotherhood leader Sheikh Al Banna was himself murdered less than two months afterwards, though the authors of the murder were never been found. Meanwhile, Communist cells formed by students, journalists, lawyers and civil servants began to spring up. Searches and arrests were the order of the day. Prisons and internment camps were full to overflowing. Egypt's troubled economic situation added to the tension.

Saad Wahba spent these difficult years as an officer in the "Boulouk Nozani," the police unit charged with hunting out members of the

Muslim Brotherhood and keeping order in the run-up to the elections. One morning, while on patrol, he arrested 40 people by locking them into a schoolyard. It transpired that the detainees were activists planning an attack on the candidate for the Wafd Party. Their arrest by Saad Wahba turned the young officer into an overnight hero for the Wafd Party, but it also put his life in danger. The Saadi party, to whom the activists belonged, wanted revenge and Saad Wahba was transferred from one town to another in an attempt to shake off his aggressors.

But there were also lighter moments. A note delivered by a government official to Saad Wahba prompted Saadi party faithful to accuse Wahba of vote-rigging. A furor ensued, as Saadi members insisted that the letter contained instructions to Saad Wahba on how to massage the electoral results. "In fact," recalls Saad Wahba, "this famous note had been sent to me to remind me that each voting office was to be provided with a pencil and an eraser, and I was ordered to make sure both were placed inside the ballot boxes before sealing them up." Such episodes richly coloured Saad Wahba's vision as a dramatist. In his plays, the serious and even the tragic are often mingled with a strong comic streak, a factor which has largely contributed to the popularity and the lasting appeal of his work.

As a reward from the Wafd Party, Saad Wahba was transferred to the Traffic Department in Alexandria, a sinecure which gave him the chance to achieve his long-held ambition of enrolling at university. But it was not until he had earned his degree in philosophy and social sciences that he resigned from the police force and took up his career as a play-

wright, journalist and show-business personality.

While Saad was still at university, he fell in love with a fellow student. But she rejected his proposal in order to marry another man who had better prospects. "The woman's husband later committed suicide, partly because he had felt perpetually tormented by the growing fame of his old rival. 'I saw this woman 25 years later,'" said Saad Wahba. "She had remarried and had children. She worked with me for a while at the Ministry of Culture and became a good friend both of myself and of my wife Samiha."

Samiha Ayoub, one of the greatest actresses in the Arab theatre, is Saad Wahba's second wife. He has two children by his first marriage, the failure of which was entirely his own fault, he says. "I was never a real husband, a father in the real sense of the word," he says. "My literary ambitions and my work as a journalist — at the time I was news editor of the daily newspaper *Al Goumbureia* — took up all my time. It should also be said that I got married on impulse, after a chance meeting with the girl I really loved together with her fiancé. That evening, as I accompanied a female colleague to a taxi rank, I found myself asking her to marry me. Just like that, on the spur of the moment, without thinking about it."

These days Saad Wahba is learning the art of being a grandfather. He looks young for his 68 years, in spite of the fact that a bad fall means he has to walk with a stick. And he shows no sign of slowing up. Far from taking a well earned rest, the grand old man of Egyptian stage and screen is already working to make sure that next year's Cairo Film Festival will be even better than 1992's — World News Link.

JTV CHANNEL 2 WEEKLY PREVIEW

Thursday, Dec. 24

8:30 The Golden Girls

9:10 Civil Wars

The divorce case of a black woman whose husband spent eight years in prison, and mother case of an accountant's wife who refuses to use a legal counsel.

10:00 News In English

10:20 Feature Film

The Story Lady

Starring: Jessica Tandy

Grace McQueen (Jessica Tandy) is a retired widow who isn't content to just settle back and watch the grass grow. She wants more from life. After being turned down for a variety of volunteer jobs because of her age, Grace rescues the world of public access cable television, where people put up their own money, and put on their own TV shows dealing with subjects from aerobics to Zen cooking. Seeing a lack in adequate educational programming, Grace decides to produce her own modest children's story hour. Her warmth and charisma make her a natural on TV, and the show becomes an overnight success. Kids rush home from school every Wednesday to watch "The Story Lady" turn ordinary words into extraordinary adventures.

11:10 Ballet — Nutcracker

The famous Nutcracker Ballet on ice.

Friday, Dec. 25

8:30 Wings

A terminal Christmas

Faye is a widow spending Christmas alone and her colleagues try to cheer her up.

9:10 Gabriel's Fire

10:00 News In English

10:20 Columbo

Columbo goes to college

Saturday, Dec. 26

8:30 America's Funniest Home Videos

9:00 Perspective

9:30 Varieties

10:00 News In English

10:20 Feature Film

Dogs

Starring: George Wyne

A science fiction story about a certain smell that turns domestic dogs into wild beasts.

Sunday, Dec. 27

8:30 Family Matters

Mr. Badweinch

Carl overcomes all the difficulties for the sake of satisfying his mother.

9:10 Documentary — National Geographic

The monkeys that live in Zambia

10:00 News In English

10:20 Law And Order

Judy, a university student, is killed. The suspect Albert Cheny denies killing her but is finally convicted.

Monday, Dec. 28

8:30 Step By Step

Rules of the house

9:10 A Fine Romance

School

The story of Louisa and the mink coat with the one million pounds.

10:00 News In English

10:20 The Dismissal

Political Drama

Tuesday, Dec. 29

8:30 The Golden Girls

The three friends and Sophia volunteer to take part in a play for children.

9:10 Made In Heaven

10:00 News In English

10:20 Feature Film

Misfits

Starring: Clark Gable and Marilyn Monroe

Wednesday, Dec. 30

8:30 Saved By The Bell

9:00 Spotlight

9:30 James Randi Investigates

Psychic Surgery

The programme exposes the fact that there are no laws in the U.K. to require anyone to have any medical knowledge or training in order to practice medicine.

Stephen Turoff, who runs a healing business in Danbury, Essex, is one of the studio guests. He discusses aspects of his work with Dr. Natalie MacDonald of the BMA. Stephen Turoff, an ex-carpenter, says that when he begins his "healing" process he goes into a trance and his body is taken over by the spirit of a long-dead German doctor named Khan.

In a videotape, shown to the studio audience, Stephen Turoff, alias "Dr. Khan," speaks in a German accent and performs two operations without anaesthetic, antiseptic or sterilisation of instruments. One operation involved inserting a pair of surgical scissors the full length of a man's nasal passage.

In the studio discussion that follows, Dr. Natalie MacDonald confirmed that everything Stephen Turoff, or "Dr. Khan," had done was perfectly legal in Britain, as no medical knowledge or training is required in order to practice medicine.

"Weirdly enough," says James Randi, "no one may practice veterinary medicine in Britain without being licensed."

"This man most certainly would not be allowed to work as a doctor in the USA or in most other countries. He could never invade anyone's body with a scalpel or anything like that. But he can do so in the U.K. Does someone have to die before anyone gets angry enough to put a stop to this?"

10:00 News In English

10:20 Taking A Stand

A true story of racial intimidation and the courage of a teenager.

Tony Williams — the drummer transformed into composer

By Charles J. Gans

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
NEW YORK — Drumming has always come easily to Tony Williams. It's taken a lot more effort, though, for the jazz drummer to become a successful composer.

At 46, Williams is acknowledged as perhaps the finest all-around contemporary jazz drummer — whether playing delicately on cymbals in a straight ahead tune or explosively on his oversize drum kit for a jazz-rock piece.

As a composer, he has written almost all the tunes for his own quintet, as well as "serious" music. One of his biggest thrills came on Nov. 2, 1990, when he premiered his composition, "Rituals: Music for string quartet, piano, drums and cymbals," a commissioned piece performed with Herbie Hancock and the Kronos quartet during the San Francisco Jazz Festival.

"For me, drumming was always easy. It was something that was kind of given to me and it got to the point where it was embarrassing because I felt it was easy to do it," Williams said.

"Composing was something that was hard for me to do and hard for me to learn. But now I know how to get up in the morning, go to the piano with a blank piece of paper...and at the end of the day I've got a piece of paper full of notes. That's a real feeling of accomplishment, and the drums are still fun to play."

This year, Williams reunited with his famous bandmates from the Miles Davis Quintet of the mid-1960s — pianist Herbie Hancock, saxophonist Wayne Shorter and bassist Ron Carter — to pay tribute to the legendary trumpeter who died last September.

"For me, Miles Davis was a great American hero, an icon," said Williams. "If I had never played with Miles

Davis, he would still have been a major influence on my life, because of his creative spirit and energy and his social awareness."

The band recorded an album in June before embarking on a world tour that finished in November, including dates in Europe, Japan and Latin America. Williams previously got together with his Miles Davis bandmates more than a decade ago in the all-star acoustic jazz quintet V.S.O.P. with Freddie Hubbard and later Wynton Marsalis on trumpet.

This time, they performed almost exclusively the music they played with Miles — such classics as *All Blues* and *So What* — as well as one new tune, Williams' *Elegie*, dedicated to Davis.

Stepping into the trumpet's chair is Wallace Roney, who also happens to be in Williams' quintet, which the drummer formed in 1986. The core of the group — Roney, saxophonist Bill Pierce and pianist Mulgrew Miller — have been with Williams since the start. Bassist Ira Coleman joined in 1989.

"We play what I call aggressive music," said Williams, during a conversation over breakfast at a New York hotel. "This is not easy-listening jazz. It's music that has edge to it and that takes chances."

These qualities are evident on *The Story Of Neptune*, the fifth album by Williams' band for the Blue Note label. The three-part title suite begins with a brisk, catchy theme, shifts into a sensual Latin-style ballad and concludes with one of Williams' typically Richter-Scale busting drum solos.

This is also the first of Williams' quintet albums to include jazz and pop standards. Williams showcases his deft brushwork on the steamy Poinciana, a ballad made popular by Ahmad

Jamal. Freddie Hubbard's frenetic Birdlike is taken at a blistering pace.

The album's highlight, though, is Williams' unique arrangement of the Beatles song *Blackbird*, which is turned into a delicately swinging jazz tune.

Williams might be a powerhouse drummer, but his personal tastes are more refined. He's partial to expensive cigars and Formula One auto racing. At stock market enthusiast, he carries copies of business week and the Wall Street Journal in his leather briefcase along with musical arrangements.

The musical roots of Williams, who now lives in Pacifica, California, south of San Francisco, come from his parents.

His father, an African-American, was a postal worker who played tenor saxophone on weekend jazz gigs. His mother, of Portuguese descent, preferred classical music.

Williams was born in Chicago on Dec. 12, 1945, but grew up in Boston. The first time he ever played the drums was in front of an audience at a gig with his father when he was 9.

As a teenager, Williams worked in the house rhythm section at a local jazz club. Alto saxophonist Jackie McLean heard him and persuaded Williams' mother to let the 16-year-old come live with his family in New York.

Williams dropped out of high school, came to New York in 1962, and began working with McLean's band. The following year, Davis invited him to join his new quintet.

"I was the drummer, the youngest, the shortest and I had left high school. Everybody else in the band was older, taller and they had all gone to college," Williams recalled.

"It would have been very easy for me to have a chip on

my shoulder and to become a bitter person at a young age...but I never wanted to be like that."

During this period, Davis moved stylistically from cool jazz and hard bop to modal jazz, free form explorations and experiments in electronics.

In his autobiography, Davis wrote: "If I was the inspiration and wisdom and link for this band, Tony was the fire, the creative spark..."

In 1969, Williams formed his own band, Lifetime, with organist Larry Young, guitarist John McLaughlin and later bassist Jack Bruce. He helped launch a new style — jazz rock fusion — with Lifetime's groundbreaking first album, *Emergency*.

In 1979, Williams left New York for the San Francisco Bay Area. Despite his success, he felt he was in a rut. His marriage was breaking up, he got into therapy and decided he could be doing more with his musical talent.

For the next six years, Williams virtually dropped out of the jazz scene, except for occasional tours or guest-record dates to pay the bills. He immersed himself in a private course of composition study.

In 1985, Williams re-emerged with the LP *Foreign Intrigue* with bassist Ron Carter, vidist Bobby Hutcherson, and Miller and Roney.

Williams says he now wants to extend his composing to film scores and orchestral music. Last year, he did a brief tour with keyboardist Jan Hammer — his first foray into electric music in 11 years — and is thinking about forming a jazz rock band.

But his main focus will remain on his quintet which Williams considers like a family. The idea, he says, is to re-create the excitement of the great working jazz bands of the past that stuck together.

THOUGHTS FOR THIS WEEK

Anything that is too stupid to be spoken is sung — Francois Voltaire, French writer (1694-1778).

There's many a mistake made on purpose — Thomas Halliburton, Canadian jurist-humorist (1796-1865).

Art is a lie that enables us to realise the truth — Pablo Picasso, Spanish artist (1881-1973).

Gene therapists begin to apply treatment

By Barbara Ritzert

MICHAEL Strauss, a molecular biologist at the Max Delbrück Centre for Molecular Medicine in Berlin, had actually wanted to carry on research into the fundamental principles of his area of work for another few years.

Like many of his colleagues, however, he has realised that he can no longer shut his eyes to an international medical development currently proceeding at a meteoric pace — the testing of gene therapy on patients.

The transfer of genes to body cells for the treatment of human illness is being tested within the framework of clinical studies, primarily in the United States but also in other countries.

Eighteen studies have already begun, a further nineteen have been approved, and plans are in the making for another dozen. The genetic therapists are no longer setting their sights only on rather rare hereditary diseases. Illnesses like cancer and AIDS are also candidates for treatment with the "gene injection."

German patients are not unaware of this fact. "Doctors in the clinics are swamped with questions as to why studies of this kind are not being carried out in Germany," says Michael Strauss. Up till now, he has often had little to offer patients with grave illnesses. "We are coming under increasing pressure," he says.

Up till now German research scientists, alarmed by the genetic engineering debate, have kept away from the international research trend in a kind of preemptive obedience to critics. The Federal Ministry of Health and Research had also remained silent.

But now the researchers are daring to come out from under their cover. The first German study into gene therapy has been approved, and four more are in the planning stage.

Roland Mertelsmann and his colleagues at Freiburg University Hospital have received approval from the University's Ethical Committee to start next year with gene therapy on patients with cancers of the colon, kidneys and skin (melanoma) where treatment has so far been unsuccessful.

Mertelsmann's team intends to use genetic engineering methods to produce a kind of vaccine against the patients' tumours. These vaccines are prepared individually for each patient and are meant to make the immune system destroy cancer cells remaining in the body after an operation.

The vaccines are manufactured in the following way. The research scientists smuggle the genetic information for an immune system attractant called Interleukin-2 into the patients' tissue cells in a test tube.

The restructured cells are mixed with tumour cells removed from the patient during the operation and after being specially treated (inactivated) are injected into the sick person's skin.

Interleukin-2, which the skin cells continue producing for about three weeks, is then intended to lure the immune system killer cells patrolling in the body to the inactivated tumour cells.

Interleukin arouses those defence cells which are in a position to "recognise" malignant tissue and stimulates them to multiply. The doctors hope that the immune system "rapid deployment forces" thus produced will also destroy other tumour cells which may still be lying dormant in the body.

The research scientists know from experiments on mice that this is possible in principle. But whether or not it also succeeds with human beings can only be ascertained through clinical studies.

Michael Strauss, together

with clinics in Munich and Berlin, also intends to start preliminary tests in January. If all goes according to plan these should result in a study using patients in autumn next year.

These patients suffer from a genetically determined high blood cholesterol level and are therefore threatened by arterial sclerosis, heart attacks and strokes even in their childhood and youth.

The intention is to lower the cholesterol level by transferring the genetic information for the so-called LDL receptor (which binds cholesterol) to liver cells. An experiment of this kind is already under way in the USA.

Other groups of German research scientists aim to try to treat haemophilia genetically or to use genetic transfer to protect cancer sufferers' defence cells from the damaging effect of cancer medicines.

In these studies the principle is always the same. The scientists remove body cells from the patients. Each of these cells has a gene smuggled into it in a test tube, and the whole thing is then injected into the patient.

The genes smuggled in are meant to cure, or at least alleviate, the patient's illness. This form of genetic therapy is comparable with an organ transplant and has nothing to do with "embryo path therapy" whereby alien genes are smuggled into ovum and sperm cells and thus passed on to future generations.

Thus the gene therapy currently being planned scarcely gives rise to any more ethical problems than other experimental processes of modern medicine.

"Gene therapy is simply another way of treating illnesses and therefore has to be just as critically examined and evaluated as any other new procedure in medicine," said Heidelberg human geneticist Friedrich Vogel at a specialist conference held at

Boehringer of Ingelheim's Foundation in Titisee in November.

The preliminary results of the first U.S. gene therapy study were presented to this international symposium. The difficulties which gene therapists have to overcome in order to develop the new method into a standard medical process also became apparent. They are still far from reaching this goal.

Already at the time of the first experiment in January 1990 the technical problems of gene therapy were the subject of violent controversy. Researchers into basics, who by definition are more interested in principles, wanted first to conduct further experiments to guarantee that gene transfer is effective and reliable.

Meanwhile the clinicians, confronted daily with patients' suffering, considered the process to be sufficiently well developed for them to risk clinical studies. Admittedly, this quarrel has become significantly quieter. But even in Titisee the gulf between the two camps was far from being bridged.

For the technical problems are still almost exactly the same as they were in 1990.

For example, even if it is possible to smuggle an alien gene into body cells in a test tube and this remains active, some types of cell switch the alien genetic factor off again once they have been implanted in the body.

This behaviour is typical, for example of tissue or muscle cells, which would normally be considered for gene transfer. Thus the basic principle researchers are currently trying to find out why and how the body switches off the alien gene, precisely in order to be able to stop it happening.

There are still major problems too with the types of cell suited to gene therapy. Up till now cells have frequently been genetically engineered which die off after a few

weeks — as for example, white blood corpuscles.

Thus gene therapy using cells of this type has to be repeated. Consequently, researchers are looking for potentially immortal root cells or precursor cells from which all blood corpuscles stem, as only these groups can continue passing on an alien gene to all daughter cells in the long term.

There are still no proven strategies for locating these extremely rare root cells with precision. Furthermore, no scientist can say exactly how many converted body cells are necessary to make the treatment effective. For this, clinical studies are needed.

They have also yet to discover the optimal way amongst the various methods of smuggling genes into the cells — if indeed there is one. Up till now in gene therapy studies research scientists have used specially mutilated retroviruses, which are therefore no longer capable of multiplying. (The virus which causes AIDS is one of these).

Only these viruses can firmly anchor an alien gene in the genetic make-up of a cell. But unfortunately this is only possible if the genetically re-programmed cells are capable of dividing. This considerably restricts the spectrum of cells which can be treated.

Furthermore one cannot exclude the possibility that during the course of these installation processes the retroviruses switch off, destroy or activate other genes in the cells, giving rise to cancer or other deficiencies. Not least, the ten per cent success rate of this transfer method is still very low.

Thus many laboratories are conducting test tube experiments to make the retroviruses safer and more effective. The scientists are also trying to use other viruses like the adeno and herpes viruses as "gene ferries."

In contrast with the retroviruses, these viruses can also infect cells which do not divide. So, for example, Ron Crystal of the National Health Institutes of the U.S.A. is banking on adeno-viruses to treat mucoviscidosis, the most common hereditary disease.

Crystal intends to commission relevant studies this year. Tests with adeno-viruses could also be advantageous in immunotherapy against cancer. Other gene transfer strategies are also being tested.

Priscilla Further of the Max Planck Institute for Biophysical Chemistry in Göttingen fires genes through the skin directly into tissue and cells with a kind of "injector pistol."

In his gene therapy studies using patients Roland Mertelsmann is banking on a process called "electroporation" whereby electrical discharges are used to render cell membranes permeable so that they can be penetrated by DNA fragments.

David Carbone of Dallas University, Texas, who is preparing a gene therapy study of lung cancer, prefers to bet on the "golden shot" whereby minute gold projectiles, coated in DNA, are catapulted into the cells using a so-called particle cannon.

It is still too early to assess what significance gene therapy will have for medicine. Research scientists will still have to shed a lot of blood and tears to make the new method as safe and effective as possible.

In order to do so, it will be essential to carry out clinical studies as well as laboratory experiments. Michael Dean of the Cancer Research Centre in Frederick, U.S.A., sees the conflict between researchers into basic principles and therapists in the following terms.

Many want first to clarify in detail how a form of therapy works and why. That is one possibility. But for the time being a pragmatic way might be better. Dean called it the Ross Perot approach after the Texas presidential candidate. "If there is no other therapy, why don't we give it a try?" — Die Zeit.

Rich countries must fur AIDS fight, experts say

By Jacqueline Frank
Reuter

WASHINGTON — AIDS experts face 1993 with the dread that the deadly disease may be spreading out of control.

They will plead for leadership and money from developed countries to fight an epidemic that is increasingly a Third World problem.

After the virus emerged in the early 1980s, it encountered scant resistance in Africa, the United States, Europe and Latin America and is now spreading through Asia. Infection has been reported in virtually all countries and actual AIDS cases in 164 of them.

Fourteen possible vaccines are being tested but no cure is in sight.

Dr. Michael Merson, chief of the AIDS programme at the World Health Organisation (WHO) says the best hope for slowing the spread of the virus is to teach people how it is transmitted and how to protect themselves.

"The clock is ticking and we are running out of time when we can make an impact, especially in Asia," he said in a telephone interview.

With no vaccine in sight, curbing the disease through education appears to be the only way to reduce an estimated 40 to 110 million infections forecast for the year 2000, but to do that develop-

ing countries need money, Dr. Merson said.

"The next two to three years are critical," he added.

Dr. Merson hopes to demonstrate to governments that AIDS prevention can save lives and money, thereby securing a new inflow of international funds to fight the disease.

"The more we can show that investing now will save many infections and deaths later on, the more likely chance we will have of raising the resources that are needed," Dr. Merson said.

Of the 2.5 million people killed by AIDS by the beginning of 1993, three-quarters were in Africa. Sub-Saharan Africa accounted for two out of three of the 13 million people worldwide infected with HIV, the virus which causes AIDS.

At a conference in Cameroon in 1992, experts from Africa said they were seeing progress in curbing the spread of the disease as people learned to use condoms to prevent heterosexual transmission and by better testing of blood products.

Doctors believe Asia is at the stage Africa was 10 years ago and risks similar damage as AIDS overwhelms health care systems, ruins family relationships, orphans children and devastates economies.

The WHO and other bodies fighting AIDS hope

education campaigns in India, China and East Asia from following same path, but in there is rising rapidly.

The group of nations known as the Global Policy Coalition fears tries are growing weak and complacent.

In its annual report coalition noted that countries' funding to AIDS in the developed world had been about million a year since 1980 did not increase in when North America eight times more on in tion than the entire of ing world, and East times more.

In the United States virus has infected one in people since 1981. 250,000 have developed AIDS. Half of have died.

But in America pro of living with the disease good, since treatment the drug AZT boost body's defences and po drugs can fight infection which prey on AIDS patients. After their diagnosis with the AIDS patients in the mid world live 10 to 20 ye.

In the developing where expensive drug rare, tuberculosis pneumonia kill AIDS tients within a year or diagnosis.

Uncovering the hidden cost of AIDS

By Martin Foreman

LONDON: For 12 years AIDS has brought tragedy to individuals and families all over the world. Now clear evidence is emerging that the epidemic also threatens the economic well-being of communities and nations across the developing world.

The threat is twofold, as is made clear in a new book by the Panos Institute, published to coincide with World AIDS Day Dec. 1:

— Firstly, the number of people in the developing world who have contracted HIV, the virus which leads to AIDS, continues to rise rapidly.

— Secondly, in every country the majority of those infected are in their 20s, 30s and 40s — adults who form the economic backbone of a country.

The world Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that 12 million people had contracted the virus by 1992, over half of them in Africa. By the end of the century, however, it predicts that 40 million people will be infected, 20 million of them in Asia. This figure is seen as a gross underestimate by the U.S.-based Global AIDS Coalition, which suggests that 100 million people will have contracted HIV by the year 2000.

Whichever figure is correct, the economic implications for individual countries are worrying. It is not only health budgets that will be strained by HIV/AIDS: the resulting illness and death also means lost labour, productivity and profits.

In Zaire, for example, the costs of labour lost to HIV/AIDS have been calculated as already amounting to 2 per cent of the country's gross national product.

Such costs are not inevitable if prevention campaigns to reduce the spread of the virus take effect. A Thai study estimated that if annual expenditure of \$300 million encouraged people to reduce the number of sexual partners and increase use of condoms, up to \$5.1 billion in medical and lost labour costs could be saved.

In the Caribbean, one study calculated that money spent preventing new infections through education and increased condom use would lead to savings worth up to 7.5 times the cost of treating those who fell ill.

The effectiveness of prevention campaigns and the actual costs of the epidemic

cannot be accurately predicted. This is partly because the speed with which the disease spreads depends on a number of social and economic factors in each country, such as the extent of poverty and the status of women. Individual and national poverty increases vulnerability to the disease in many ways. Poverty restricts education and literacy, which reduces individuals' ability to protect themselves from disease.

Poverty also hampers the establishment of clinics for sexually transmitted infection (STIs), and untreated STIs are a major factor in the spread of HIV in India and many countries in Africa.

Poverty often leads to migration and the social disruption that can result in casual sexual encounters — as in the case of mineworkers in southern Africa and Nepali women working in the brothels of India. Women are the poorest of the poor, placed at a greater risk because their economic dependence on men leaves them little opportunity to dictate the terms of their sexual relationships or use of condoms.

The risk intensifies in urban areas, such as those of East Africa and India, where the ratio of men to women is high; because men have fewer potential sexual partners, individual women are at higher risk of infection — and therefore at higher risk of infecting their partners.

In the worst affected countries, where 25 per cent or 30 per cent of the urban population have contracted HIV, fewer people will survive to their 40s and 50s. For industry, this represents the loss of valuable skills and experience.

A nation which can its citizens only opportunities for social and university education less human capital to those with skills and who "control" HIV. The social implications likely to be equally on the burden of dependent and the elderly creasingly falls on you adults.

In the 1980s, the worst affected by HIV/ was central and eastern ca, where initially the predominantly affected better educated and relatively wealthy, causing the scarce skills and expertise. In the 1990s the fast shifting to Asia, where disease is more common among the uneducated unskilled. That fact together with higher level training and education, countries such as India Thailand more resilient the disease. Because of a larger populations, however, the impact may be as great has been seen in part Africa.

It may be that the predictions of the impact epidemic will not be used: awareness of the disease has mobilised community based organisations the globe. But without committed backing from governments, their efforts likely to have little effect. Few governments however, are willing address directly the social and economic inequalities that lead to the spread HIV/AIDS. And until it do so, the outlook for lions at risk looks bleak.

Panos.

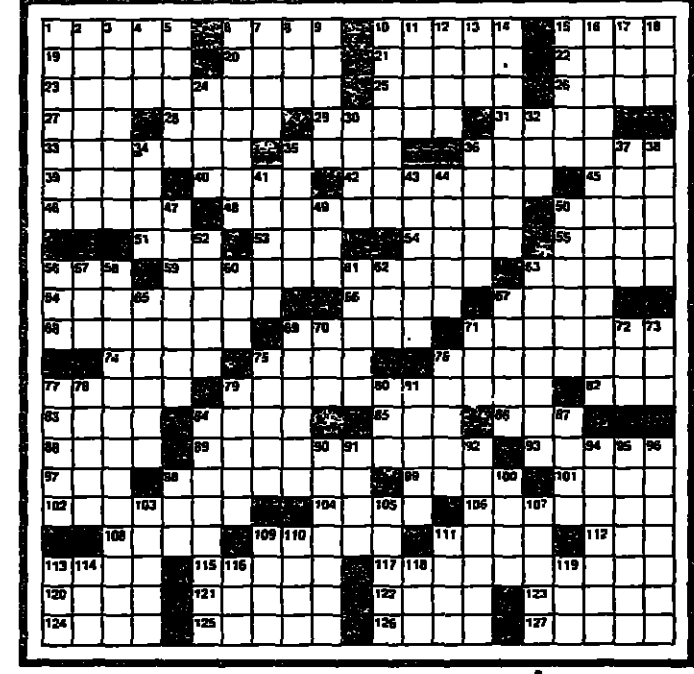
WEEKEND CROSSWORD

THIS THE SEASON
By Thomas W. Schler

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78 "The Summer
82 A Turner
83 Hopalong Cassidy
84 "Maidenhair"
85 Negatively
86 Gold, in Coria
87 "Hail, Noel"
88 "Hail, Noel"
89 "Hail, Noel"
90 "Hail, Noel"
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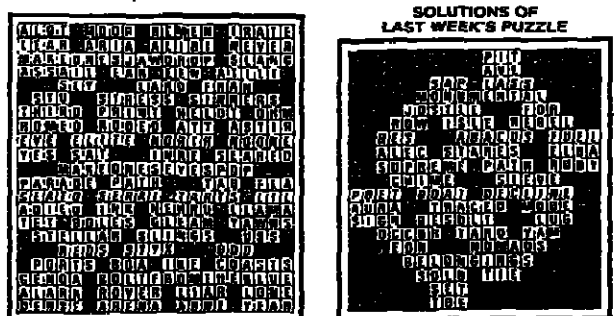


Last Week's Cryptograms

1. Wann't that huge animal who wrecked my dig today the cute playful puppy of only a week or so ago?
2. Zany baby baboon pleased many employees at local zoo with his wild antics.
3. Being up the creek without a paddle beats being there soaked, with a paddle and no creek.
4. Plainly, fresh peanuts are good-tasting and good for you, and that's it in a nutshell.

CRYPTOGRAMS

1. EGUDY HA QGNG. RPHAP NGEG EGRUYDY
CHUQL RSRHFRFD CUDHPL LURHA
PGHAP LG GNGH. R QLRD NDY ADSU
QDDA. —By Rita Salvato
2. PRIDE GILDEN PHUMED UX LAUMVMIX UX
REMDKH ZGAKIDEN: "FVFN. LD LPN UAZL
IG VY LAUYD PYGAE." —By Armitage Shanks
3. ISTBA IDTYTAL PWESC KDRKTU THWEL
YOTUDYIDTKD BA LOBY ITSBACKWRD:
"HTKC YTP B PTY CKTH." —By Ed Huddleston
4. YKK EVMODEDURI CYUKVMC HAVE ODUM
HAYOC. —By Frank N. Stein



Diagramless 19 x 19, By Craig Schmitz

- ACROSS
1 Chase
2 Walking stick
3 Narrow path
4 Backache
5 Well-mannered
10 Mayberry
11 Character
12 Unpleasant city
13 — perfect
14 — perfect
15 He's out
16 He's out
17 He's out
18 He's out
19 He's out
20 He's out
21 He's out
22 He's out

- 23 Govt. org.
24 People from
25 Odense
26 Spring pair
27 Spring pair
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32 Spring pair
33 Spring pair
34 Spring pair
35 Spring pair
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مكتبة الأصل

Deportation issues

By Hanna Nasir

Mr. Eagleburger and

on Television

40 days ago, Jordan tele-

showed Mr. Eaglebur-

an American TV inter-

speaking very clearly

the Israeli act of de-

portation. He said Israel

is the basic part that we

on Jordan Television.

ever, a few moments ear-

lier television showed a

part of the interview. It

ed that appeared on Jor-

TV — namely Mr. Eagle-

er's statement against the

act of deportation, but it

showed Mr. Eagleburger

that he understands the

act of the Israelis as they

dealing with a bunch of

deportees (referring to

us).

point I wish to comment

is not Mr. Eagleburger's

remarks about Hamas,

rather Jordan Television's

very decision not to in-

terrupt the remark. I simply

do not understand the pur-

pose. Never that purpose is,

does not TV think that peo-

ple with their programme?

their officials they real-

ize because of such silly

ing. Jordan TV can lose

its credibility? We are

dealing with what are

the emotions of JTV

ed by Mr. Eagleburger's

remarks about Hamas, but we need not be fed with Jordan TV's emotions in a news programme. We want the news and nothing but the news. Let viewers make their own judgments and their own interpretations. If Jordan Television wants to make its own interpretations, they have the full chance to do it in one of their several talk programmes but certainly not in the news.

II- Mr. Eagleburger's sinister remarks

It is amazing that Mr. Eagle-

burger did not deal with the

issue of deportation in a more

forceful manner. What the

Israelis have done is wrong and

that is what he should have

said. It is true that he did not

condone the deportation, but

by slandering Hamas, and by

expressing sympathy with

Israel's "dilemma," Mr. Eagle-

burger has almost given a

rationale for Israel's illegal ac-

tions.

Actually one is amazed that

Mr. Eagleburger understands

the dilemma of the Israelis but

does not understand the dilem-

ma of the Palestinians whose

lives have been shattered by

Israel's life-long criminal ac-

tions. One is not only talking

here about the usurping of

land, but more so about the

destruction of Palestinian

nationalhood.

Would Mr. Eagleburger now

dare express the same sinister remark against the Israelis? I doubt that he is capable of doing that. But what is more important now is to test his credibility related to the latest U.N. Security Council Resolution (No. 799) requesting Israel to return all the 418 deportees. Would he — as the U.S. secretary of state — simply express disappointment with Israel if Israel did not allow the deportees to return, or will he stand up to the challenge and force Israel (as he could undoubtedly do) to comply with the Security Council decision so that all the deported Palestinians would return to their homes and families? If he can do that, and can pave the way to enforce other U.N. Security Council resolutions related to the Palestinian question that the U.S. has voted for over a number of years, then one can assure Mr. Eagleburger that not only would violence sub-

side in the area, but peace

would prevail. But if Mr. Eagle-

burger cannot assure the

Palestinians that Security

Council resolutions can be im-

plemented, then I suggest that

his sinister remarks are as void

and biased as his foreign policy

is.

III- Deportation and the

democracy of Israel

Deportation is an illegal ac-

tion. It is contrary to Article 49

of the Geneva conventions that

protect civilians under occupa-

tion. The illegality of deporta-

tion cannot be legalised by

court orders or a unanimous

governmental decision. No

matter what Israel does to en-

gulf the deportation order by

legal terms, it remains an ille-

gal action.

It is illegal even if the de-

portation occurs to areas with-

in the jurisdiction of Israel

itself. But it will be doubly

illegal if the deportation occurs

in areas outside the jurisdiction

of Israel. By deporting the

Palestinians to Lebanon, Israel

has not only tampered with the

legal rights of the deportees

but has also violated the

sovereignty of Lebanon.

The only legal course of ac-

tion that Israel could take is to

try people. If individuals are

found guilty — even by Israeli

standards — then the interna-

tionally legal course of action is

imprisonment but not deporta-

tion. In the present case of

deportation — as in all other

previous cases — the deportees

were not even brought to a

trial. But it should still be

emphasised that even if the

deportees were brought to a

trial, the deportation remains

illegal.

words, one should qualify

democracies with the terms

"bad" or "good" depending

not only on the procedures but

the standards of decisions. By

its consistent illegal actions,

taken democratically against

the Palestinians, Israel has be-

come an excellent example of a

bad democracy.

Hanna Nasir is the deported

president of Beir Zeit Uni-

versity in the occupied West

Bank.

Political parties in Jordan — prospects for the future

By Faisal Akef Al Fayed

A PARTY may exist primarily as

an electoral machine for gaining

power, with no coherent philoso-

phy; or it may have deep ideolo-

gical beliefs; or it may be defined

as a group which agrees upon a

principle by which the national

interest might be served or as a

group publicly organised with the

intention of gaining political

power in government in order to

realise certain aims.

Parties usually develop when

the mass of the people have an

opportunity to play an active role

in political activities. Political

parties in Jordan have been active

for some time and the process of

legalisation of these parties is

taking place at present. So far a

number of parties have been

legalised, some were not and

many others are still to apply. But

can political parties in Jordan live

up to the expectations of the

Jordanian people?

Before trying to answer this

question we have first to identify

the functions of political parties

in general.

A primary function of political

parties is the organisation of the

electorate. Parties should be able

to bring together, behind a com-

mon programme, people who as

individuals would be too dispar-

ate in capacity and ideas to affect

the trend of events.

Second, political parties should

set their goals according to the

existing conditions.

Third, parties can perform a

useful role in clarifying issues and

providing information on candi-

dates and current events.

Fourth, parties provide the

machinery for the selection of

personnel for government. They

select candidates for the legisla-

ture and as potential leaders of

the state. They make the task of

the voter easier by narrowing

down the field from which he has

to choose at election.

Unfortunately, and taking into

consideration the short period of

time during which the majority of

Jordanian political parties have

been politically active, mem-

bership in political parties was

and still is very low. So, regarding

the first function of a political

party, that is the organisation of

the electorate, Jordanian political

parties have not been very suc-

cessful in this area.

After a careful study of the

platforms of some Jordanian po-

litical parties, without being spe-

cific, the majority of these parties

promise the electorate social jus-

tice, equal opportunities, sup-

remacy of the law, liberty, equal-

ity among sexes, full employ-

ment, economic prosperity, a

high standard of living, etc... This

surely contradicts the second

function of political parties: to set

the goals for the electorate not

according to whims but according

to their feasibility. In Jordan, and

because of our very limited re-

sources, parties should be more

realist than idealist.

Parties in Jordan also do not

provide information to the electo-

rate on current events. To give

them credit, this will probably

change if parties publish their

own newspapers.

As for the function of selecting

candidates for the legislature, un-

fortunately this will not make the

task of the voters easier but much

harder because we have now

more than thirty parties on the

political arena with more or less

the same principles and ideas.

This will surely lead to confusion

among the electorate. Since po-

litical parties in Jordan can be said

to represent the right, the left and

the centre, they will succeed only

if they merge into three or four

major parties, have a sound pro-

gramme, be honest with the peo-

ple and be realist. In this way,

they can draw membership, orga-

nise the electorate, have a fair

representation in Parliament and

add a new brick to the building of

democracy in Jordan.

Christmas, once holiday for all faiths, is another casualty of war

By Ned MacFarquhar

The Associated Press

JEKO, Bosnia-Herzegovina

9-year-old boy whose father was

in the war, waited quietly

for Santa, played by

an American soldier on fur-

ther. He was waiting for

a package of vitamin-

supplements and powdered

milk from humanitarian

agents.

Kojan said he had a spe-

cial for Santa to stop the

war, maybe it stop shooting.

I don't know what he shoot,"

he said. "I don't know what

he shoot," he said. "I don't

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"I don't know what he shoot,"

he said. "I don't know what

he shoot," he said. "I don't

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know what he shoot," he said.

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he said. "I don't know what

Villa pile on pressure for Premier League title

LONDON (R) — Norwich still top the English Premier League going into Christmas despite two consecutive defeats, but Aston Villa are piling on the pressure.

While the leaders have begun to stumble, Villa have lost only one of their last 14 league games. Villa manager Ron Atkinson said: "We reach the halfway point of the season on boxing day (Saturday) and if you're in an established position then, it can help keep the momentum going."

"Second in the Premier Division coming up to Christmas — that's a position worth fighting for. I think we're well-equipped to cope."

Villa, who trail by four points, have the tougher programme with a midlands derby at Coventry, followed by a home game against Arsenal.

Norwich entertain Tottenham and then travel to fading champions Leeds.

Villa look set to recall striker Cyrille Regis against his old club Coventry on Saturday. He has made a rapid recovery from a thigh injury and should replace Dalian Atkinson, who has a stomach muscle injury.

The man who could delay Villa's rise is Coventry striker Mickie Quinn, whose double in Satur-



Aston Villa's Dalian Atkinson



Norwich defender John Polston

day's 5-1 destruction of Liverpool took his tally to eight goals in five games since his arrival for Newcastle.

"We have created so many chances in the past few games that we were bound to sack them away some time," he said of last week's impressive performance.

Coventry face Manchester United Monday, with Alex Ferguson's side also running into form

appointed about the result as our supporters. Our changing room was like a morgue after the game.

"But we are still top of the League and I don't see why we can't bounce back from this. We have suffered setbacks before this season and come back and we can do it again."

There will be no panic changes, says manager Mike Walker: "You don't write players off just because of a couple of defeats. It's time for them to show everyone what they are made of."

Kenny Dalglish's expensive Blackburn entertain fading champions Leeds, a clash which pits two of the best midfield veterans around — 34-year-old Gordon Cowans and Leeds' Gordon Strachan.

"They're an inspiration to us all," said Rovers midfielder Mark Atkins. "It's not an area where players can coast but they have shown what's possible if you look after yourself."

David Batty is set for a Leeds recall for the first time since suffering a hairline ankle fracture in October, if he comes through a reserve outing. Full-back Mel Sterland is also testing his chances of a first senior game in nine months in the same match.

Knicks have NBA's best defence in years

NEW YORK (AP) — The last time an NBA team was as stingy on defence as the New York Knicks, Wilt Chamberlain was in high school and Michael Jordan was eight years away from drawing his first breath.

The 1954-55 season, with no players to approach the offensive skills of a Jordan or Chamberlain, was a transition year for the National Basketball Association. The 24 second shot clock was new, the game was slow and teams were still defensive minded.

The lowest defensive average that year was 89.7 points by Syracuse, which won the NBA championship despite scoring 91.1 points per game. Fort Wayne was second in fewest points allowed at 90.0, followed by Milwaukee's 90.4.

Those three defensive averages, in a season in which only one team in the entire league managed to score 100 points per game, still are in the record book as the lowest in league history.

This season's Knicks, however, are playing defense at 1954-55 levels against teams with 1990s offensive skills.

They will take a 91.6 defensive average into Friday night's game with defending champion Chicago, which scored 75 in the teams' only other meeting this season.

"The Knicks seem to enjoy playing defense," says Pistons assistant Don Chaney, a backcourt defensive stalwart in his playing years. "That is so rare nowadays. Those who do it well enjoy it, and you can see how hard they work at it."

The Knicks have been devastating defensively at home, where they are 12-1. The only loss was 110-103 in overtime against Charlotte, one of only three teams to score as many as 90 points at Madison Square Garden. New York's defensive average at home is 88.2.

"The defense they put out was unbelievable," Miami's Rony Seikaly said after the Heat lost 91-87 at New York. "They make you shoot every shot awkwardly. Defense is what gives them their wins."



Coach Pat Riley

Heat coach Kevin Loughery said the Knicks play such a physically intense style that officials become weary of calling fouls. It's a strategy Loughery admires.

The Knicks' intensity got national attention last spring in the playoffs when they took the Bulls to seven games in the Eastern Conference semifinals, nearly pounding Jordan and Scottie Pippen into submission.

Point guard Doc Rivers, new to the Knicks this season, said the team picked up an undeserved reputation during that series.

Coach Pat Riley, whose Los Angeles Lakers teams played tough defense but will be remembered as a fast breaking team, is utilizing the Knicks' natural strengths just as he did with the Lakers.

Riley has three of the strongest players in the NBA in Patrick Ewing, Charles Oakley and Anthony Mason, and 6 foot 10 (2.00 metre) Charles Smith is a starter at "small" forward. The Knicks also have good size in the backcourt with Rivers at 6-4 (1.93 metres) John Starks and Hubert Davis at 6-5 (1.95 metres) and Rolando Blackman at 6-6 (1.98 metres).

NBA firepower developed rapidly after 1954-55. Just three seasons later, every team in the league averaged more than 100

points, and just three years after that, every team in the league gave up at least 114 points per game.

So in just six years, the NBA best defensive average went from 89.7 to 114.1.

It wasn't until 1972-73 that another team surrendered less than 100 points per game, and the Detroit Pistons' 1990-91 defensive average of 96.8 — 5.2 more than the Knicks today — stands as the lowest in the NBA since 1956-57.

The Knicks are well on their way to taking that modern standard and pushing it into the low 90s.

O'Neal rallies Magic over Jazz

Rookie Shaquille O'Neal had 20 points, 19 rebounds and five blocked shots and sparked a fourth quarter rally that carried Orlando to a 101-98 victory over Utah.

The 7-foot-1 (2.15 metre) centre sat on the bench late in the third quarter and early in the fourth period with four fouls, but returned to bail out the faltering Magic with six points, six rebounds and three blocked shots in the final 10 minutes. It was the fourth consecutive win for Orlando following a six game losing streak.

The Jazz, who lost for only the fourth time in 12 road games, got 30 points from Karl Malone and 20 Jeff Malone. But the two Malones were a combined 3 of 11 in the final quarter.

Two athletes banned for 4 years

LONDON (R) — British sprinter Jason Livingston, who was sent home from the Barcelona Olympics after failing a drugs test, was banned Wednesday for four years.

The announcement follows Livingston's appearance Monday before the disciplinary committee of the British Athletic Federation.

The verdict means a life-long ban by the British Olympic Association, who earlier this year ruled any doping offender would no longer be eligible to compete in Britain's games team.

In Zurich, Russian distance runner Galina Ikonnikova has also been banned for four years after failing a drugs test at a Swiss road race in October.

Henry Perschke, president of the Swiss Athletics association's commission on combating drug use, said he had received notification via the International Amateur Athletic Federation that Ikonnikova, 11th in this year's London Marathon, had been banned by her home association for four years — the standard penalty for drug use.

The ban was confirmed by the IAAF in London Wednesday.

Livingston, nicknamed "baby Ben" after his Canadian hero Ben Johnson, failed a random, out-of-competition drug test before Barcelona.

Livingston, the European indoor 60 metres champion and the man regarded as Britain's successor to Olympic champion Linford Christie, can appeal to an independent panel.

SPORTS NEWS IN BRIEF

Sydney Olympics would turn profit — organisers

SYDNEY (R) — A summer Olympics staged in Sydney in the year 2000 would cost \$1.19 billion and turn a profit of \$4 million, the bid committee said Wednesday. Committee head Rod McGeoch, releasing an advance budget for the event, said an 80,000-seat stadium would be built, along with a velodrome, coliseum, sports hall and facilities for equestrian events, shooting, tennis and baseball. Sydney is competing against Beijing, Berlin, Brasilia, Istanbul, Manchester, Milan and Tashkent for the event. The winning bid will be decided by the 96-member International Olympic Committee at a Monte Carlo meeting in September. Television rights are expected to raise \$488 million, sponsorships \$297 million and ticket sales some \$140 million.

Philippines invites Magic for anti AIDS appearance

MANILA (AP) — The Philippine government has invited Magic Johnson to visit the country to promote AIDS awareness. Johnson retired from the National Basketball Association after testing positive for the virus that causes AIDS. In a letter sent Tuesday, president Fidel Ramos asked Johnson to spend five days here touring the country to urge youth to take precautions against the fatal disease.

Turnbull reappointed captain

MELBOURNE (AP) — Wendy Turnbull was Wednesday reappointed as Australian Federation Cup tennis captain for the ninth straight year. Tennis Australia president Geoff Pollard announced Turnbull had retained the non-playing position ahead of Lesley Hunt and Judy Dalton, both of whom lodged challenges. Former top 10 player Turnbull led Australia to a semifinal finish in the 1992 Federation Cup. The 1993 Federation Cup will be played in Frankfurt from July 18-25.

Bowe-Dokes fight set for February

NEW YORK (R) — Heavyweight champion Riddick Bowe gave Michael Dokes an early Christmas present by giving the former champion and current recovering drug abuser a title fight, but Dokes said Tuesday he was not completely happy with his gift. Dokes, resplendent in a full-length and silver-gray fur coat he said cost him \$30,000, said he wants more than the \$750,000 he is reported to have accepted to fight Bowe for two-thirds of the world title February 6 at New York's Madison Square Garden.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR FRIDAY DECEMBER 25, 1992

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Merry Christmas. Concentrate on new ideas which can be put into operation in the future in connection with an astrologer who has proven somewhat disappointing in the past but holds promise for the future.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Carry through with whatever agreements you have made with your loved one and then tonight approach tasks facing you from a new improved standard.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You have obligations at your home you have been lagging doing so get them out of the way, then you can have a wonderful time at entertainments this evening.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You have some interesting communications with others to get off so do this quickly so later you will be able to enjoy a good time with your own clan.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Continue with that material plan of action that has already been put in motion, then you can see ways to start soon new ventures of importance.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You can wind up some important decisions during the daytime then tonight get into statements, make a good budget.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You have some big ideas of a

confidential nature during the day that would be good for you to put in motion now, then be very social tonight.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Make specific entertainment, social arrangements with your good friends during the day then tonight do small courtesies for your attachment.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You would be wise to add something that enriches your daily duties during the day while tonight go after personal goals in a positive manner.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You can finish a discussion with a newcomer to each of your advantages after which you would be wise to go out in the world to contact bigwigs.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Keep at that course to get some big material results from your special duties and later you will be able to get off to see interesting personalities.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Be available to what influential men want to do to encourage your progress, then later you see just how they can greatly benefit you.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Get those improvements in charm and comfort finalised for your surroundings after which you can get out with fascinating associates and friends.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR THURSDAY DECEMBER 24

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: New conditions coming into your life replace what was deducted by the recent solar eclipse so eat lightly, and get plenty of rest and wait a few days before placing new plans of action into effect.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) New interests and activities of all kinds can be the most productive means by which you utilise this day to its fullest excellent potential.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Consider how you can best join with persons of vision in the days ahead to have considerably more of what you regard as the good things of life.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Some partners or outsiders who have made a prosperous life are now in the mood to extend to you information on just how it can be done by you also.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) A whole new and inspired stance for making your usual occupation opens the way for you to be more successful at your daily activities.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You are highly articulate now and able to do the things you most enjoy and with the persons whom you like to share their company, so arrange new amusements.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Consider how you can best

make your home a harmonious place the holidays and start produce this effect.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Shopping for gifts plans to visit relatives things you appreciate best to be put into motion.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Considering practical plans of business is good for you to be judgment today on increase your assets.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Many positive up so that your future with insight so let this on.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You are most accurate now, still and listen to your perceptions and you to follow them.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Partners and with acquaintances are now in seeing your best giving you can to get them together.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Your surroundings most improved by a good look at them and your special skills to effect.

THE BETTER HALF.

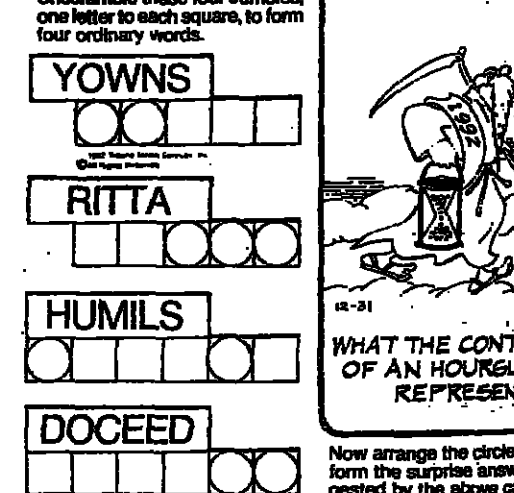
HARRIS MARRIAGE COUNSELOR



"I wanted to marry someone who's perfect...but I couldn't marry myself."

JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



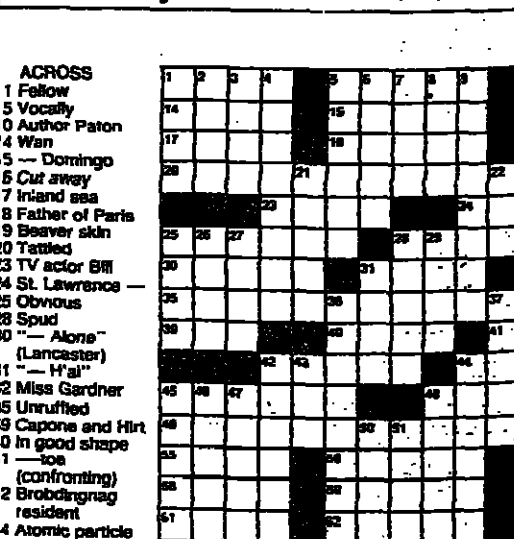
Answer here: THE _____ OF _____

Yesterday's Jumbles: DEMON ELITE BEGONE PSYCHE EXCHANGE

Answer: How many a shopper has come home SPENT

THE Daily Crossword

by Raymond Hamel



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Yesterday's Puzzle Solutions

ACROSS
1. Fable
5. Vocally
10. Author Paton
14. Wren
15. Domingo
16. Cut away
17. Friendless
18. Father of Paris
19. Beaver skin
20. Tatted
23. TV actor Bill
24. St. Lawrence
25. Obvious
28. Spud
31. "I'm" (Lancaster)
32. Miss Gardner
35. Unaffiliated
39. Capone and Hitt
40. In good shape
41. Sole (contrasting)
42. Broodingly resident
43. Atomic particle
48. Nip
49. Observes
50. Boxer's
55. Dry shrub
56. Cafe patron
57. — de vire
58. Not a soul
59. — Janeiro
60. Feed the kitty
61. Try out
62. Horse
63. Diluted
DOWN
1. Figure experts
2. Dwell (on)
3. Jail
4. Unorganized
5. Phase
6. Fat
7. Scurry (hurry)
8. Home of the Jazz
9. House servant
10. Seem
11. TV series
12. The Omen, e.g.
13. Full of gossip
21. Sit
22. Busy insect
25. Unit of type size
28. Trust
29. N.M. art colony
30. Unspoken
32. Astronaut
33. Storm front?
34. Give a leg up to a yegg
35. President's option
36. Elsie — Presley
37. Arthur's father
38. Art Linklater's hometown
42. Eschepus
43. — were a rich option
44. Looked searchingly
45. Insufficient
46. Means of rapid transportation
47. Archeological site
48. Garbo, e.g.
50. Cafe au —
51. Indian
52. Superior
53. Singer
54. High school
55. College
56. High school

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMMAM HIRSHCH
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IT HAPPENS TO EVERYONE—PART II

North-South vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH
♠ A 5
♥ 10 9 4
♦ A K 10 3 2
♣ 10 7 4
WEST
♠ 8 6
♥ K J 8 7 3 2
♦ K J 7
♣ Q J
EAST
♠ Q 10 8 7
♥ 6 5
♦ 9 5 4
♣ K 9 3 2
SOUTH
♠ K J 4 3 2
♥ A Q
♦ 8 6
♣ A 8 6 5

The bidding:
North East South West
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass
2 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass
Pass Pass Rdbi Pass
Pass Pass

Opening lead: Two of ♠. Even experts are not immune to embarrassing bidding misunderstandings. In a major national championship, one of the best pairs in the U.S. played two hearts doubled with a trump suit consisting of A x opposite a singleton. Sitting South here, on a deal from the 1976 World Team Championship, was arguably the finest player of the day,

Benito Garozzo of Rome, partnered by Arturo Franes, North.

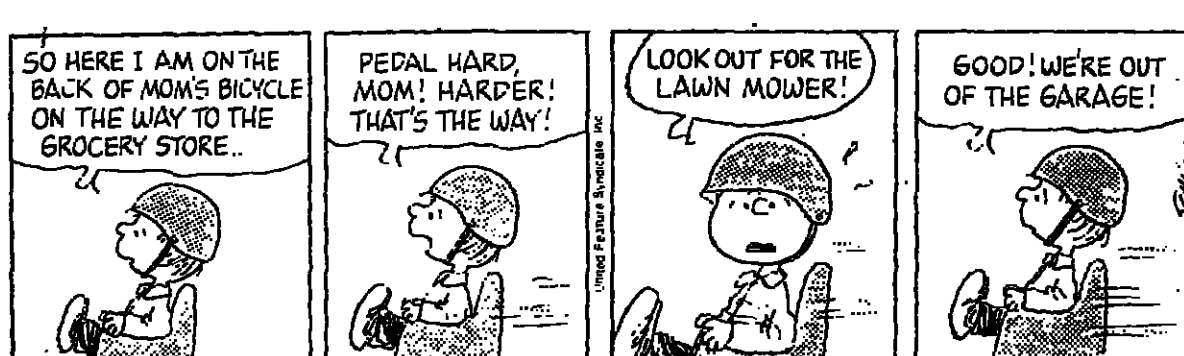
The bidding started off in routine fashion. Obviously, Garozzo thought two hearts was forcing and was simply looking to see whether it would elicit a spade preference from partner. Equally evident, Franes thought it was natural. That set the stage for a looming calamity.

Garozzo's redouble was intended as a takeout bid, waiting for North to complete the description of his hand. Franes was still not on the same wavelength and, thinking the bid said "I've got them, partner, was happy to pass.

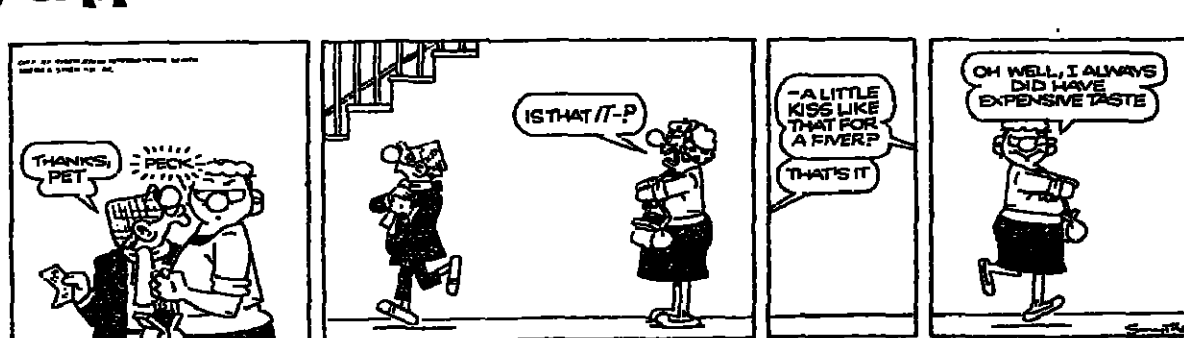
Lesser mortals would go for 4-900 points in this type of situation, but the gods were smiling on Garozzo. After winning West's opening trump lead with the queen, declarer cashed the ace and king of spades and led a third round of the suit. To cut down on dummy's ruffing ability, West trumped with the jack and returned another heart to declarer's ace.

Declarer cashed the table's ace and king of diamonds, then came to hand with the ace of clubs to lead another spade. Whether or not West ruffed, the ten of hearts would become the fulfilling trick.

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



هكذا من الأصل

Economy

Financial Markets
in co-operation with
Cairo Amman Bank

Currency	NEW YORK	HONG KONG
U.S. Dollar	1.5365	1.5410
Deutsche Mark	1.4885	1.4941
Swiss Franc	1.4405	1.4390
French Franc	5.4220	5.4125
Japanese Yen	125.70	125.75
European Currency Unit	1.2285	1.2306

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	3.50	3.50	3.50	6.00
Deutsche Mark	7.43	7.18	7.00	6.87
Swiss Franc	8.87	8.75	8.47	7.75
French Franc	6.18	6.18	5.87	5.47
Japanese Yen	11.25	11.25	10.25	9.25
European Currency Unit	10.94	10.75	10.12	9.31

Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm
Gold	332.55	6.50	Silver	3.71	.080

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin
Date: 23.12.92

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.688	0.690
Deutsche Mark	1.0551	1.0604
Swiss Franc	0.4318	0.4340
French Franc	0.4776	0.4800
Japanese Yen	0.1269	0.1275
Dutch Guilder	0.3843	0.3862
Spanish Ptas	0.0980	0.0985
Italian Lira	0.0484	0.0486
British Pound	0.02100	0.02111

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	1.7970	1.8200
Deutsche Mark	0.03625	0.03945
Swiss Franc	0.1829	0.1840
French Franc	2.2800	2.3000
Japanese Yen	0.1861	0.1872
Dutch Guilder	0.2020	0.2150
Spanish Ptas	1.7560	1.7820
Italian Lira	0.1861	0.1872
British Pound	0.3275	0.3335
Greek Drachma	1.4445	1.4635

Index	22.12.92	Close	22.12.92	Close
AShare	170.91		171.03	
Banking Sector	127.04		127.17	
Insurance Sector	183.31		184.33	
Industry Sector	228.25		228.34	
Services Sector	242.39		242.11	

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for sterling world currencies and gold against the dollar at mid-session. The London Foreign Exchange and bullion markets Wednesday.

U.S. dollar	1.2612/17	Canadian dollar	1.5900/10
Deutsche mark	1.7850/7900	Deutsche mark	1.4365/80
Swiss franc	32.55/60	Swiss franc	5.4200/4300
French franc	1420/1425	French franc	123.79/84
Italian lire	7.0100/0200	Italian lire	6.7600/7700
Japanese yen	6.1200/1300	Japanese yen	1.5332/42
Gold	332.40/332.90	Gold	

Ukraine government moves to restore order in economy

KIEV (R) — The Ukrainian government, battling to prevent a complete collapse in its ailing economy, publishing a list of new regulations Wednesday, aiming to restore government control over many sectors of the economy.

The measures remove price controls on some basic foodstuffs, including milk, butter and some types of bread.

But the regulations tighten controls on other sectors of the economy. Official sources said the amount of goods and services subject to state controls would increase by 25 per cent once the regulations come into force on Jan. 1.

Price controls would be maintained in the metallurgical and chemical industries, machine-building and for such products as oil, cement, salt, sugar, vegetable oil, meat and eggs.

Prices for goods produced by monopolies would also be controlled to prevent enterprises exploiting their market position.

"The measures will stop the chaotic rise prices," Deputy Economic Minister Viktor Kalnyk told Reuters.

Another new measure aimed at regaining state control was the publication of a government-approved list of enterprises and organisations which would be allowed to export most metals, gas, oil and electricity.

The government also issued a decree allowing people to apply to own the land they use as allotments. These plots produce up to one third of Ukraine's agricultural output.

Other decrees introduced a 30 per cent tax on profits and a variable income tax.

Value added tax, a tax applied at all stages of production and borne by the end-user will be cut to 20 per cent from 28 per cent and farming enterprises will be totally exempted from it.

One year after Ukraine won independence from the former Soviet Union, the economy is in disarray. Month-on-month inflation is running at 30 per cent and government figures show that the 1992 budget deficit was 44 per cent of gross national product in November.

Government officials say a coherent programme of market-oriented reforms, coordinated with international financial institutions, will be published shortly.

IMF cuts global growth projections for next year

WASHINGTON (R) — In a major downward reassessment of economic activity next year, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Tuesday said global growth would only increase 2.3 per cent and the industrial countries would be up by a sluggish two per cent.

As early as only a few months ago the international lending agency had been far more optimistic calling for 3.1 per cent growth for the world as a whole and 2.9 per cent for the large and wealthy countries in 1993.

In a highly-unusual revision of its semi-annual World Economic Outlook, the IMF said the deflationary impact from a reduction of debt annulled during the high-flying 1980s was a major factor in the continued weak outlook.

At the same time the IMF blamed the weakness on high interest rates in Europe caused by the German decision to fight inflation at all costs as it moves through the process of reunification.

The report painted a bleak picture overall with increased tensions over trade, prevalent and continued worries in currency markets, and a virtual collapse of cooperation among the major industrial players.

"The persistent currency turbulence since September, growing tensions over trade, and other indications of a reduced commitment to international policy cooperation in the major industrial countries have contributed to the increased uncertainty," the report said.

It said it was still uncertain how much further the restructuring of debt would go in the industrial countries before companies and consumers decided they could again afford to begin making new purchases.

"IMF — and most other analysts — have so far underestimated the extent of this problem, and the risk remains that even the revised growth projections for the countries most affected may prove optimistic," the report said.

The report said only North America seemed poised for recovery, even though the growth improvement in the United States would be gradual and less buoyant than previous upturns.

It estimated the United States would grow by three per cent next year followed by a two per cent increase in 1992. This is only one-tenth of a per cent below its projection in October for next year.

The situation in Germany was far more serious. The IMF estimated growth next year would be tepid 0.6 per cent, a staggering two per cent decline from its estimate in October. For this year it said growth would hit 1.6 per cent, 0.2 per cent below the previous assessment.

Japan, which has also been labouring under hard times, was projected to grow 2.4 per cent next year compared with 1.6 per cent in 1992. However the 1993 figure represented a 1.4 per cent decline and the 1992 estimate was down 0.4 per cent from the earlier projections.

IMF Managing Director Michel Camdessus, who met with reporters last week, called on the new Clinton administration to concentrate its efforts in economic policy on reducing the country's overwhelming budget deficit and mounting of debt.

At the same time he said Germany should move again to cut interest rates to help economic growth in Europe and Japan should consider further stimulus action should that prove necessary by a weakening economy.

The IMF, as it has in the past, strongly criticised governments for not cutting away at budget deficits when the economy was growing strongly during the 1980s.

It said there had been missed opportunities by both the United States and Europe and that a large unfinished economic agenda awaited action by policy makers.

The IMF normally releases its global economic assessment once in the spring and once in the autumn.

Greece's 1993 austerity budget passes parliament

ATHENS (R) — Greece's 1993 austerity budget was adopted by parliament early Wednesday, with Prime Minister Constantine Mitsotakis saying tough sacrifices must be made to save the country's shattered economy.

The budget, which covers the third year of his conservative government's austerity and reform programme, was passed by a vote of 151 to 144. The five remaining deputies were absent or abstained in the vote.

During the debate before the vote, Mr. Mitsotakis rallied against the opposition Socialist Party and his life-long political foe, Andreas Papandreu.

He said the Socialists had been afraid of the political cost of rescuing the economy during their 1981-89 administration and their policy was mainly one of spending money they did not have.

"You left nothing but debts behind you," he said. "I'm brave because I don't care about the political cost. I care only about the future of the country."

Mr. Mitsotakis ruled out 1993 pay settlements for public sector workers above the inflation rate, about 15.5 per cent a year.

He said he knew the average Greek family was suffering but he could not give up the ground which had been won by difficult sacrifices since the conservatives won elections in April 1990.

Mr. Mitsotakis has a slim absolute majority of just one seat in the 300-seat parliament and he made the budget vote one of confidence in his government.

Political commentators had been closely watching a growing number of dissidents in Mr. Mitsotakis's party to see whether any disgruntled members might bring down the government.

B.A. deal with USAir collapses

WASHINGTON (R) — British Airways (B.A.) PLC scrapped its proposed \$750 million investment in USAir Group Inc. Tuesday, saying the U.S. government gave it a "clear indication" the deal would not be approved.

U.S. Transportation Secretary Andrew Card and airline industry officials indicated the deal fell apart because the B.A. government refused to give access to U.S. airports at London's Heathrow Airport.

British Air said it dropped its proposal and began exploring alternative ways of linking up with USAir after the U.S. government gave it a "clear indication" that this particular transaction would not be approved, a company spokesman said.

"We expected this victory," Mr. Mitsotakis said after the vote. "Now we will steadily proceed with our programme."

Mr. Mitsotakis, 74, has been sharply criticised by some of his deputies for his handling of the economy, with widespread concern his austerity measures will lead to an election defeat in 1994. He has also been attacked over his foreign policy.

But conservative deputies, despite some critical speeches, closed ranks and backed their government in the vote.

The 1993 budget, presented to parliament Nov. 30, has a deficit of 1.37 trillion drachmas (\$6.85 billion), compared to 1.19 trillion (\$5.95 billion) in 1992.

If the servicing of outstanding debt is added to this the total public sector borrowing requirement in 1993 rises to 2.9 trillion drachmas (\$14.5 billion).

Kuwait scales down petrochemical plans

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait has scaled down its plans for a giant petrochemical complex, cutting out the plants to produce aromatics, a senior official of state-owned Petrochemical Industries Company (PIC) has said.

The decision will reduce the overall cost to less than the 680 million dinars (\$2.27 billion) originally projected when the project was first approved in 1989, Ahmad Al Awadi, the PIC official in charge of marketing and planning, told Reuters.

PIC is in talks with three foreign companies which it wants to take an equity stake of between 40 and 49 per cent in the project, he added.

He declined to name the companies. The specialist Middle East Economic Digest named four last month — Mobil Oil Corporation, Exxon Corporation, Union Carbide and Saudi Basic Industries Corporation.

Sheikh Awadi said: "There are some major disputes in the issues we are talking about ... if we don't reach agreement in the next half of next year, we may go ahead alone."

The present plan was to produce ethylene, polythene of various densities and ethylene glycol, he added.

The exact cost was not yet clear and the savings from dropping aromatics would not necessarily be substantial. The aromatics in the 1989 project were orthoxylene and paraxylene.

Oil Minister Ali Ahmad Al Baghli said last month that a foreign partner would bring advantages in expertise, marketing and training Kuwaiti staff.

Sheikh Awadi said that even if PIC found foreign partners, it may need to seek licensees for some of the processes.

The plant will be built in Shuaiba, on the coast south of Kuwait City, on a site of more than 100 hectares (250 acres).

Minister seeks to change image of India

BOMBAY (R) — India must transform itself into a major trading nation that is no longer dependent on foreign aid by unshackling its industry and encouraging foreign investment, Finance Minister Manmohan Singh has said.

India's only chance to prosper in the modern world was to abandon its inward-looking, insular attitude and develop a vigorous export sector, he said.

Mr. Singh, the architect of India's bold programme of economic reform, said the country must stop fighting the old East India Company, which ushered in British colonial rule, and open its doors to foreign investment.

"The old mentality that we have had of all the time thinking of the sad experience with the East India Company — that we must learn to forget about, India of 1992 is not the India of 1750 or 1800 or 1857," he told a seminar in Bombay on India's future for the next 25 years.

"We have today enough institutions to ensure that foreign enterprises, if they are to operate in our country, will operate in accordance with our national rules and regulations, and therefore we have nothing to fear from that," he declared.

Under Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, India has abandoned four decades of socialism, abolishing complex licensing rules that stifled industry and producing far-reaching trade reforms.

But criticism of the reforms, particularly from labour leaders, has increased because of fears about mounting unemployment in the country of 850 million people.

An import surge has not been matched by growth in exports, putting renewed strain on the balance of payments. Imports rose by 22 per cent in April-September against just 5.4 per cent for exports.

Mr. Singh said that over the past 40 years India had failed to curb widespread and chronic poverty, the country remained dependent on overseas financial aid to pay its way internationally, and the quality of most people's lives was far below what it should be.

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U.S. airbase in Italy is on alert for Yugoslavia role

ROME (R) — A U.S. airbase near Italy's northeastern border with Slovenia has been put on alert and is being readied to receive up to 3,000 U.S. troops, the Italian News Agency (ANSA) said Wednesday.

It said a squadron of F-16 fighters was expected at the Aviano Base in the next few days and that the reinforcements would operate alongside Western air forces in the Balkans.

A spokesman at the Aviano Base said it was U.S. Air Force policy never to comment on current or future contingency plans.

There was no immediate comment from the Italian Defence Ministry, which has no control over the long string of U.S. bases like Aviano which are dotted around Italy.

Some 1,800 U.S. servicemen are stationed at the Aviano Base, which also employs 500 civilians.

In May, it was made a support base for the 401st U.S. Fighter Wing, which used to be based at Terejona outside Madrid.

But the spokesman said this was a purely technical name change and none of the F-16s or personnel which had been based at Terejona had moved to Aviano.

The ANSA report said U.S. electronic surveillance planes had been based at Aviano for the last month and were using the airfield to fly to the Hungarian-Serbian border as part of a Western monitoring effort of the skies of the rump Yugoslavia.

ANSA said: "The U.S. Air Force Base at Aviano has been placed on alert in the last few

hours. There is talk of the imminent arrival of 2,500 to 3,000 American military... the arrival of a squadron of F-16s is also expected in the next few days."

The ANSA report comes at a time of growing expectations that the West will soon enforce a no-fly zone to ground the Serbian Air Force.

British Prime Minister John Major, on a visit to British troops who have been sent to escort U.N. aid convoys into Bosnia, said he expected the world body to discuss a no-fly zone resolution within days.

"I think there is going to be a no-fly zone resolution. The nature of it is clearly important, that's still under discussion," Mr. Major said. But the draft resolution would come before the United Nations "in a few days time."

The Bosnian Serbs have said they will regard U.N. troops as enemies if force is used to impose the no-fly zone and Britain, whose troops have already come under fire in Bosnia, is anxious to ensure they are not further endangered.

But Britain's Lord Owen, co-chairman of the Geneva peace talks on Yugoslavia, said on NBC Television that he would recommend a long delay in enforcing the no-fly zone.

"Pass the resolution this week by all means but hesitate long and hard before you enforce because it would gravely damage the whole humanitarian effort this winter," he said.

NATO said Wednesday it was sending its military plans for en-

forcing the no-fly zone over Bosnia to United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Ghali.

The decision to despatch the plans followed the expiry of a delay requested by Germany to discuss how the proposals might affect a row at home over the legality of deploying German forces outside the NATO area.

Bonn Tuesday asked its 15 NATO partners to wait until noon (1100 GMT) Wednesday before sending the plans, to allow for a morning meeting between Chancellor Helmut Kohl, his coalition partners and the German ministers involved.

"The secretary-general of NATO, Manfred Woerner, will provide NATO's current contingency planning designed to support possible United Nations efforts to ensure respect of the no-fly zone over Bosnia-Herzegovina to the secretary-general of the United Nations, who has requested it," an alliance spokesman said. "The letter will be sent today."

Dr. Ghali asked NATO last week to draw up contingency plans and the Security Council is working on a resolution to enforce the no-fly zone, which came into force in October but has since been violated, mostly by the Serbs.

The 16-nation Western alliance has declined comment on the military plans, but NATO sources say the no-fly zone measures include using Western warplanes for airstrikes against Serbian airfields if the U.N. decides such a move is needed.

The NATO plans also include

setting up safe havens for civilians and deploying more monitors and peacekeepers in troubled areas like Macedonia or Kosovo, should the U.N. decide to take further action to stop the war spreading.

However, they do not include committing large numbers of Western ground forces to try and end the fighting — something most allies have ruled out as too risky.

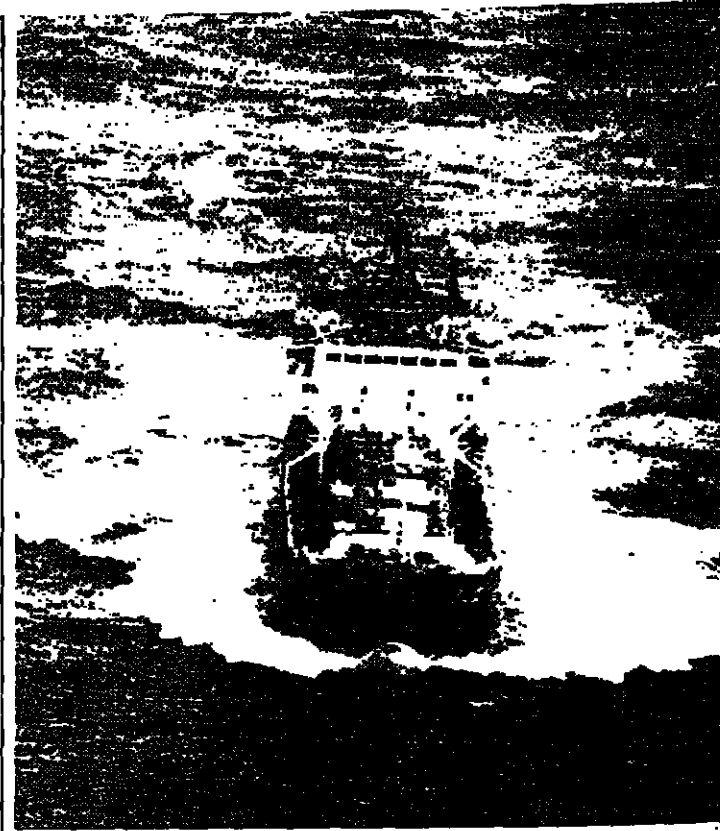
The U.N. approved the no-fly zone to stop ground attacks by mostly Serbian aircraft. The Western allies are divided over how far and how fast to enforce the ban, but they have agreed NATO can do the job if asked to do so by the United Nations.

Meanwhile, Serbia's hardline President Slobodan Milosevic and his ruling Socialists seemed headed for certain victory Wednesday but the opposition threatened to boycott the new parliament, claiming the vote was rigged.

"Slobodan Milosevic has won," a spokesman for his ex-Communist Socialist Party (SPS) said on Tuesday night.

Quoting preliminary returns, he said Mr. Milosevic had won 56.2 per cent of the vote in Sunday's elections, and the SPS would be the strongest party in both the Yugoslav and Serbian parliaments.

But moderate challenger Milan Panic and the main opposition parties that backed his bid to topple Mr. Milosevic claimed the elections were rigged and demanded fresh polls within 90 days.



The Japanese plutonium carrier Akatsuki Maru sails in the Pacific (AFP photo).

Solomons protest over Japanese plutonium ship

HONIARA, Solomon Islands (R) — The Solomon Islands has protested to Tokyo after a Japanese ship carrying plutonium entered its territorial waters, a Solomon Islands foreign affairs spokesman said Wednesday.

The Akatsuki Maru, carrying 1.7 tonnes of radioactive plutonium from France to Japan, entered the South Pacific nation's 200-nautical-mile exclusive economic zone late Tuesday, the spokesman said.

"The government of the Solomon Islands wish to remind the government of Japan that Solomon Islands foreign policy strongly opposes any vessel carrying nuclear and radioactive substances to travel through its 200-mile exclusive economic zone," the note said.

"The Solomon Islands government would very much appreciate it if the government of Japan would respect the government of Solomon Islands concern and en-

sure that the Akatsuki Maru does not pass through its waters."

Japan's charge d'affaires in Honiara, Noboru Kawagishi, told Reuters he had forwarded the protest note to Tokyo.

A spokesman for the Greenpeace environmental group in Honiara, Philip Pupuka, said the Akatsuki Maru could take 18 to 20 hours to travel through Solomon Islands waters.

The ship, last sighted heading towards Rennell and Bellona in the southern Solomon Islands, could pass within 50 nautical miles of Solomon's coastline, Mr. Pupuka said.

On Monday, Greenpeace said it had spotted the plutonium ship within New Caledonia's exclusive zone, despite Japan's promise that it would not enter the maritime zones of other nations.

Japanese authorities have kept the ship's route secret for fear of terrorist attack.

Minister urges truce as IRA bombs London suburb

LONDON (R) — Irish nationalist guerrillas struck an affluent London suburb, setting off a bomb in its railway station, a police spokesman said.

The bomb exploded at the tube station in Tuesday afternoon and there were no injuries.

The attack was carried out dur-

ing London's evening rush hour and police evacuated the area, causing chaos for commuters and Christmas shoppers.

The Irish Republican Army (IRA), fighting to end British rule in Northern Ireland, has launched its most intensive bombing campaign of mainland Britain since the 1970s and police have dealt with more than 30 blasts in London and others in the north of England.

Manila coup leaders sign truce

MANILA (R) — Right-wing coup plotter Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan emerged from four years in hiding Wednesday as the Philippine government stepped up efforts to end a series of debilitating insurgencies by releasing prisoners.

The cashiered colonel, two co-conspirators and government officials signed an immediate ceasefire and agreed to begin formal peace talks in the second week of January.

News of the accord, signed in the Quezon City area of Metropolitan Manila without the media fanfare that normally accompanies such events, was followed by the release from prison of 65 leftists.

President Fidel Ramos ordered the leftist prisoners pardoned or

released on bail, while government officials appealed to their leaders to agree to terms for peace talks.

Welcoming the agreement with Col. Honasan's rebels, Gen. Ramos said it put an end to a needless war between brothers.

"This government and this president welcome you as a father does whose impetuous sons have left his house in bitterness and anger but are now returned safe and whole to the bosom of the family," he said.

The government linked Col. Honasan to three of the six coup attempts made against former President Corason Aquino from 1986 to 1989, when a bloody revolt nearly toppled her.

A former hero of the popular revolt that ousted President Fer-

U.N. warns Angola rivals to move on peace accords

UNITED NATIONS (R) — The Security Council urged the Angolan government and its chief UNITA rival to enter into reconciliation talks, warning that the world would not support U.N. peacekeepers in Angola forever.

The council, in a statement approved by all 15 members, appealed to President Eduardo Dos Santos and UNITA leader Jonas Savimbi to accept Secretary-General Boutros Ghali's invitation to meet him in Geneva or Addis Ababa in the near future. Dr. Ghali will be going to Europe and the Horn of Africa in early January.

Mr. Savimbi said he would attend but Mr. Dos Santos wants Dr. Ghali to come to Luanda, apparently feeling he should not leave Angola during this tense period.

The Council statement said both sides needed to produce "early evidence" of their willingness to work together so that U.N. members would "feel encouraged to continue to commit its scarce resources" to the Angola operation.

The United Nations organised parliamentary elections in Angola late in October. They were won by Mr. Dos Santos' party and immediately challenged by Mr. Savimbi, who renewed the country's civil war. Both men are supposed to participate in a second run-off presidential election.

Forces from UNITA, the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola, have since occupied more than two-thirds of the country. Thousands of people were killed in clashes in early November when government troops ousted UNITA from the capital Luanda.

The Security Council statement was in response to a letter from Dr. Ghali who said there was "disturbing evidence that both sides are continuing their preparations for a resumption of war on a large scale."

He said that if the two leaders showed willingness, he would ask the Council to enlarge the peacekeeping force, including some armed troops in Luanda so that Mr. Savimbi and other UNITA members could participate in a new government.

But he too warned that without signs of progress on implementing peace accords they signed "the international community will no longer feel justified in committing scarce resources to the continuation of the U.N. operation in Angola on its present scale."

COLUMBIA

Motorist shot in head blows bullet out of his nose

CHANDLER, Arizona (R) — A motorist who was shot head during a traffic dispute, lodged the bullet by blowing nose in the hospital emergency room, police said. The apparently had lodged in a said Sgt. Steve Sprague, a spokesman. The 25-year-old man was shot in the right ear Sunday while riding in his girlfriend's car. Police another driver apparently angry when she refused to pass. Her name and the were withheld because she was a victim of a sexual assault and released. Desert Hospital spokesman Susan Gordon said. Police ing from a license, arrested Leonard Farnia. Chandler on suspicion of a vated assault with a di weapon and two counts of endangerment. He was released from jail Monday on a bond, a sheriff's spokesman.

Delighted brother tracks down sex-change sister

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand (R) — A New Zealand man has reunited with the he lost contact with 41 years — only to find she is not brother. Ian Phillips, 52, spotted his long-lost sister in England week for the first time since discovered she had in sex-change and was now living with an adult son and two daughters. "I feel great. I've developed a bigger in I have a brother, nephew, nieces. It could have been better Christmas present," Phillips told the Christchurch Star newspaper. He said his sister, who is now 53, had been diagnosed as a hermaphrodite and had undergone an operation 30 years ago to become a Mr. Phillips says he and his were separated in August 1951 when he was 11 and they were among several dred British children from disadvantaged families sent to Australia to start a new life as child migrant scheme. They were adopted by different families. She stayed in Adelaide was sent to a farm, in Australia. "Part of me was singing for 40 years. I haven't been able to settle. I didn't give about anything," Mr. Phillips said.

Russia to send monkeys on space flight

MOSCOW (R) — Russia plans to send two macaque monkeys space next week as part of a U.S.-Russian research project officials at the Institute of Medical and Biological Sciences. The monkeys, to be launched on Dec. 28, were expected to provide valuable information on the brain's reaction to weightlessness, they said. The monkeys and other animals, including frogs, would be in space for at least a week. Russian space programme, initiated from the Soviet Union, used monkeys for experiments the past. They have stood up to previous space trips, without have not always been trouble-free. In 1987, one of two monkeys aboard a satellite broke from restraints and played with equipment before the spaceship returned to Earth thousands of miles off course.

Iran surgeons perform low-cost heart transplant

NICOSTA (R) — Iran surgeons performed a heart transplant on a 16-year-old boy, said the cost of the operation was only a fraction of that in other countries. The two-hour operation, described by Iranian Television as Iran's first, was carried out in the southern city of Shiraz, the site of one of Iran's medical schools. It named head of the transplant team eight surgeons as Mohammad Sanjarian. "I feel like Mahmoud Haghighat, who received the heart of a teen killed in a car accident, told television from his hospital bed. Dr. Sanjarian said the operation cost 250 million rials (\$17,000) other countries but only five million rials (\$3,400) in Shiraz University's Namazi Hospital. Iranian doctors have been performing kidney transplants for years, after the country's top religious leaders ruled that the transplant of human organs did violate Islamic Law.

'Sombre year' is theme of Queen Elizabeth's Xmas speech

LONDON (R) — A transcript of what purports to be Queen Elizabeth's Christmas Day broadcast to Britain and the Commonwealth, in which she talks about her "difficult days" this year, was carried in a tabloid newspaper Wednesday.

The sun said it received a tape of the speech hours after it was recorded by the British Broadcasting Corporation Monday but did not say how.

The queen's speech is supposed to remain confidential until the time of the broadcast. Buckingham Palace refused to comment but the BBC said it would conduct a high-level inquiry into the matter.

"There is no evidence that we know of to suggest the disclosure of the broadcast is associated with anyone at the BBC. Nevertheless, we will be looking into it," a BBC spokesman said. He declined to comment on the Sun's report but said it had a "ring of authenticity about it."

If it is authentic, the Christmas speech will be one of the most emotional broadcasts the 66-year-old queen has made during her 40 year reign.

The text appeared to be similar to a recent speech in London when she described 1992 as her "annus horribilis" (horrible year) which will go down as a bleak chapter in royal history.

The separation of heir to the throne Prince Charles and his wife Princess Diana this month capped a disastrous year for the queen and followed the separation of her second son, Prince Andrew, and the Duchess of York.

The queen's only daughter Princess Anne last April became only the second senior royal figure to divorce since the 16th century. This month she became the first since King Henry VIII to remarry after a divorce.

The sun says the queen will thank people, many of whom she says have troubles of their own, for offering her their support and sympathy during the year but she does not make any reference to her children's marital troubles.

"Like many other families, we have lived through some difficult days this year. The prayers, understanding and sympathy given to us by so many of you in good times and bad have lent us great support and encouragement," the queen is quoted as saying.

"It has touched me deeply, but much of this has come from those of you who have troubles of your own. As some of you may have heard me observe, it has indeed been a sombre year."

The queen said her heart went out to those whose lives had been blighted by war, terrorism, famine, natural disaster or economic hardship, the paper said.

The Sun says Queen Elizabeth, who is head of the Church of England, describes how her religious faith helped her through difficult times but said there was no magic formula to transform sorrow into happiness.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

U.N. to consider Macedonia's application

SKOPJE, Macedonia (R) — Macedonia's application to join the United Nations will be put on the agenda of the Security Council in January, the republic's foreign minister, Denko Maleski, said. Speaking to Macedonian Radio from New York, Mr. Maleski said he met Tuesday with Yoshio Hatano, Japan's ambassador to the U.N. Japan takes over as chairman of the Security Council on Jan. 1. Maleski said Mr. Hatano assured him that Macedonia's admission would be on the Security Council's agenda, to be published on Jan. 4. Macedonia has seceded from the rump Yugoslavia but its application to join the U.N. has not been considered, mainly because of objections from Greece, Greece, whose northern province of Macedonia borders the former Yugoslav republic, to use of this name and also to the former Yugoslav republic's use of Greek Macedonian symbols. It fears this could imply territorial aims against Greek territory.

'EC treaty can live without Britain'

BRUSSELS (R) — Belgian Prime Minister Jean-Luc Beheane Wednesday criticised Britain's handling of its term as European Community (EC) president and said the bloc could force ahead with the Maastricht Treaty without London if necessary. "Rather not (without Britain), but yes if we have to," Mr. Beheane told Reuters in an interview. Several EC states have suggested setting a ratification deadline for Britain and Denmark, the other country in the 12-nation bloc that has yet to ratify the treaty on closer economic and political union, threatening to leave them behind if they fail to meet the deadline. Mr. Beheane, an expert in mending bridges between two bickering communities in linguistically-divided Belgium, said going ahead with the Maastricht Treaty with 10 instead of 12 countries would pose a high number of legal problems. "But my experience in my own country taught me that a legal solution can be found if there is the political will to succeed," said Mr. Beheane, who will face the European aid test when Belgium takes over the six-month EC presidency in July.

Thailand to close border with Khmer Rouge

BANGKOK (R) — Thailand has ordered the closure of border crossings to Khmer Rouge zones in Cambodia to comply with U.N. sanctions against the guerrilla group, a government spokesman said Wednesday. The sanctions, imposed because of the Khmer Rouge's refusal to comply with the Cambodia peace accord, will shut down the multi-million-dollar logging trade and prevent oil supplies from reaching the guerrillas. Bangkok had opposed the sanctions because they would hurt Thai companies involved in the trade. However, as a member of the United Nations, it is fully co-operating with its resolution and has ordered the Interior Ministry to enforce the closure of temporary checkpoints. The decision was reached at a cabinet meeting Tuesday. The Khmer Rouge, supported by Thailand during 13 years of civil war, are thwarting implementation of the 1991 peace accord by refusing to disarm and allow U.N. peacekeepers free access to their zones.

Taiwan opposition charges poll fraud

TRIPOLI (R) — Taiwan's opposition accused the ruling Nationalist Party of election fraud Wednesday after prosecutors uncovered a case of apparent vote-rigging during Saturday's parliamentary polls. Protesters clashed with police in the Western county of Chiayi, injuring about a dozen people, and the stock market plunged 3.7 per cent amid fears of a major confrontation between the Nationalists and the main opposition Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). Prosecutors said they had found serious voting irregularities in the eastern county of Hualien, where former DPP Chairman Huang Hsin-Chieh lost to a Nationalist candidate by 26,605 votes to 26,667. The prosecutors said after a 22-hour recount that the number of votes counted at ten polling stations in Hualien exceeded by 738 the number of ballots handed out by election officials there. "The Nationalists obviously stuffed the ballot box," said Chiu Mao-Nan, spokesman for Huang. "Election officials were controlled by the Nationalists and engaged in fraud en masse."

Gandhi not properly protected — inquiry

NEW DELHI (R) — The Indian government and the ruling Congress Party did not provide adequate security to assassinated former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, an inquiry by a Supreme Court judge said Wednesday. The report on the inquiry by Judge J.S. Verma was tabled in parliament, the United News of India reported. The federal government, the Tamil Nadu state government and Mr. Gandhi's colleagues in the Congress Party shared responsibility for the breakdown in security arrangements, it said. Mr. Gandhi was killed on May 21, 1991 when a woman suicide bomber with explosives strapped to her waist stepped up to him at a public meeting in the Tamil town of Sriperumbudur and set off the device. Mr. Gandhi, the assassin and 16 other people died.

Russians struggle for control at Afghan border

MOSCOW (R) — Tens of thousands of refugees are streaming across the frontier from Tajikistan to Afghanistan, breaking down border installations, and Russian troops are struggling to keep control, a border official said Wednesday.

"The situation is very, very bad," an official of Russian border troops in the Tajik capital Dushanbe said by telephone. "We used to say our border was a bastion. That is no longer so."

"The main problem is that we do not have enough troops. We need urgent measures to improve the situation," he told Reuters.

A border forces official in Moscow said that on Tuesday 20,000 refugees from Tajikistan's simmering civil conflict had surged across the frontier at one point to the Pyanj Border River. Another 20,000 crossed further along the border.

Russian troops, kept on the Tajik frontier at the request of the Dushanbe government, were not using force against peaceful refugees. But soldiers had opened fire to stop a group of about 10 armed men crossing the frontier from Afghanistan.

The Moscow border official said many of the Tajik refugees had begun moving back across the frontier. Troops were taking measures to disarm those who were carrying weapons.

The former Soviet border with Afghanistan consists, along most of its length, to two high wire fences and a no-man's land with hidden tripwires and flares.

Russia views it as its own frontline in the absence of any secure frontiers within the old Soviet Union.

China orders French consulate in Guangzhou closed

PEKING (R) — China ordered France Wednesday to close its consulate in the booming southern city of Guangzhou in retaliation for the sale of French jet fighters to Taiwan, a Foreign Ministry spokeswoman said.

The demand that Paris shut its diplomatic office in China's most vibrant region was Peking's sharpest diplomatic action against a Western nation in 11 years, diplomats said.

Vice Foreign Minister Jiang Enzhu summoned French Ambassador Claude Martin to tell him the sale of Mirage fighters to Taiwan was unacceptable, the spokeswoman said.

Mr. Jiang demanded that the consulate-general in Guangzhou be shut within one month because of the reported approval of the transaction, involving 60 Mirage 2000-5s.

"The act of the French government has done serious harm to the basis of Sino-French relations," he told the ambassador. Peking has never renounced the use of military force to retake

Taiwan, which has served as the base of the Nationalist Chinese government ever since it lost the mainland to Communist control in 1949.

"By insisting on the sale of fighter aircraft to Taiwan in disregard to the strong objection of the Chinese side, the French government has seriously infringed upon China's sovereignty and security, interfered in China's internal affairs, and obstructed and jeopardised China's efforts to achieve peaceful reunification (with Taiwan)," Mr. Jiang said.

"This is absolutely unacceptable to the Chinese side."

China has also been infuriated by plans to sell 150 U.S. F-16 fighters to Taipei, but so far it has not taken any concrete action against Washington.

Analysts believe Peking's hands have been tied by the need to keep the huge United States market open for China's booming export industries.

France said Wednesday it closed the French consulate in Guang-

zhou, which has served as the base of the Nationalist Chinese government ever since it lost the mainland to Communist control in 1949.

But Paris would still not confirm the reported sale of 60 Mirage 2000-5 fighters, which industry sources have valued at about \$2.6 billion.

"This affair will give rise to no comment from me except that of expressing regrets for the decision taken by the Chinese authorities," Foreign Ministry spokesman Daniel Bernard told reporters.

French Ambassador Claude Martin was told to shut the consulate in the southern city of Guangzhou because of the sale of Mirage fighter jets to Taiwan, a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman said Wednesday.

The French government, unwilling to upset relations with China, has refused to acknowledge the sale, which was reported clinched last month and is believed to include the Mirage fighters and 1,500 air-to-air missiles. The package is valued at \$4 billion.

French arms makers, squeezed by a slump, lobbied hard for the deal, which was denounced by French grain farmers who feared Chinese retaliation against their exports.

Earlier this month China's official news agency Xinhua said the fighter sale could jeopardise French firms' access to the market of more than one billion Chinese consumers.

France encountered the same dilemma earlier this year over the sale of frigates to Taiwan in a deal worth \$4.8 billion. The deal went through despite criticism from China. Some French newspapers said Peking changed its stance on that sale after Paris promised China economic aid.

In addition to the consulate in Guangzhou, also called Canton, France has an embassy in Peking and another consulate in Shanghai.

Asked if France planned to retaliate against China's order to close the consulate, Mr. Bernard said: "I have no knowledge that we intend to express anything other than regrets."